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ABSTRACT

The Thomas B. Fordham Foundation has commissioned studies of state academic standards in five core subjects. This is the second of these studies, focusing on standards for history. After the controversy surrounding the proposed "national history standards" in 1994, history has become a subject with no generally accepted national standards. Thirty-seven states and the District of Columbia responded to the Foundation's request for documents outlining state history standards. Thirteen states had no standards at all for the teaching of history. Fifteen criteria were defined for the evaluation of the history standards, grouping them into the areas of: clarity, organization, historical soundness, historical content, and absence of manipulation. Only the standards in Virginia met all the criteria. Virginia's standards are clear, measurable, descriptive, demanding, and quite specific. Closely following Virginia are California, Texas, and Massachusetts, but then the quality of standards drops sharply. Barely a third of the jurisdictions reviewed received a grade of "C" or better. Most of the states have a long way to go in setting standards for the teaching of history. An appendix provides notes on each of the states, in alphabetical order. (Contains eight tables.) (SLD)

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State History Standards

An Appraisal of History Standards in 37 States and the District of Columbia

February 1998

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By David Warren Saxe

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State History Standards

An Appraisal of History Standards in 37 States and the District of Columbia

by
David Warren Saxe

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State History Standards: An Appraisal of History Standards in 37 States and the District of Columbia, by David Warren Saxe, Fordham Report Volume 2, Number 1, February 1998.

Errata

1. Marie Antoinette's name is mis-spelled on the front cover.
2. The telephone number for ordering publications, on the back cover, is missing a hyphen. The number should read 1-888-TBF-7474.
3. Page 28, "Sunshine State Standards (Social Studies)" should be italicized.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

List of Tables iii

Foreword by Chester E. Finn, Jr. v

Executive Summary vii

Introduction 1

Criteria for Assessment 2

Procedures 3

Definitions 4

Discussion of Results 11

Criteria and Scoring 12

- Cluster A: Clarity and Writing 12
- Cluster B: Organization of History Standards 13
- Cluster C: Historical Soundness 14
- Cluster D: Specific Historical Content 19
- Cluster E: Absence of Manipulation 20

Afterword 23

Appendix: Notes on Individual States

- Alabama 25
- Alaska 25
- Arizona 26
- Arkansas 26
- California 26
- Colorado 27
- Connecticut 27
- Delaware 27
- District of Columbia 28
- Florida 28
- Georgia 28
- Hawaii 29
- Idaho 29
- Illinois 29
- Indiana 29
- Iowa 29
- Kansas 30
- Kentucky 30
- Louisiana 30
- Maine 31
- Maryland 31
- Massachusetts 31
- Michigan 32
- Minnesota 32
- Mississippi 32
- Missouri 33
- Montana 33
- Nebraska 33
- Nevada 33
- New Hampshire 34
- New Jersey 34
- New Mexico 34
- New York 35
- North Carolina 35
- North Dakota 35
- Ohio 36
- Oklahoma 36
- Oregon 36
- Pennsylvania 37
- Rhode Island 37
- South Carolina 37
- South Dakota 37
- Tennessee 37
- Texas 38
- Utah 38
- Vermont 38
- Virginia 39
- Washington 39
- West Virginia 39
- Wisconsin 40
- Wyoming 40

TABLES

National Report Card ix

Table 1 5
State Raw Scores (in Alphabetical Order)

Table 2 5
State Raw Scores (in Rank Order)

Table 3 6
State Frequency Scores (in Alphabetical Order)

Table 4 6
State Frequency Scores (in Rank Order)

Table 5 7
State Raw Scores Grouped by Cluster (in Alphabetical Order)

Table 6 8
Top Scores by Cluster

Table 7 9
Raw Scores for All Criteria

Table 8 10
Rank Order of States by Final Grade

FOREWORD

The Thomas B. Fordham Foundation is pleased to present the first-ever appraisal of state history standards, prepared by David Warren Saxe of the Pennsylvania State University in consultation with a panel of distinguished historians.

This is the second such publication by the Foundation, which has commissioned studies of state academic standards in all five of the core subjects designated by the governors and President Bush at their 1989 education "summit" in Charlottesville. In July 1997, we issued Dr. Sandra Stotsky's evaluation of state English standards. Concurrently with Dr. Saxe's report, we are publishing an appraisal of state geography standards. These will shortly be followed by examinations of state standards in math and science. These five subjects are the heart of the academic curriculum of U.S. schools.

All are critically important, of course, but history earned special visibility, due to the debacle of the proposed "national history standards" first issued in 1994. The controversy that those standards provoked—they were rejected, for example, by a vote of 99 members of the U.S. Senate—made many states unwilling to use them. Consequently, history is a subject in which there are no generally accepted national standards.

Thus, the main burden of determining what history young Americans should learn in school has fallen to the states. The mission that the Thomas B. Fordham Foundation set for itself—and for Professor Saxe—was to determine how well the states have done in shouldering this vital obligation.

Alas, with a handful of exceptions, the answer is not well at all. Of the 38 jurisdictions with pertinent standards that Dr. Saxe was able to obtain and evaluate, only five give appropriate attention to history in the social studies curriculum, and just four earn "honors" grades for their handling of history—while 19 receive failing marks.

What does this mean? Most importantly, it says that the vast majority of young Americans are attending school in states that do not consider the study of history to be especially important. No doubt some children are learning lots of solid history from excellent teachers in fine schools. Their good fortune, however, appears to be serendipitous. State standards rarely constitute a ceiling on what can be taught and learned. But it's not unreasonable to view them as the floor below which no child or school should fall. And what Professor Saxe demonstrates in the pages that follow is that, when it comes to history, most states have placed that floor where the sub-basement ought to be.

He shows other important realities about the current condition of history in the United States. Perhaps most worrying, he shows that in only a few instances is history itself the focus of the state academic standards that pertain to it. In most jurisdictions, history—like geography—remains mired in a curricular swamp called "social studies," which we are confident is *not* what the governors and president had in mind when they designated history and geography as 40 percent of the subjects in which all children should become competent.

Also troubling is the fact that 13 states have no standards at all for the teaching and learning of history—at least none that Saxe, with determined effort, was able to identify. Inasmuch as it's the states that bear constitutional responsibility for the provision of primary/secondary education in this nation, the states that contribute the lion's share of the education budget, the states that do most of the student testing, and the states that make key rules in such domains as graduation requirements and teacher qualifications, we find it a matter of deep concern that a quarter of them have not said—because they do not care?—what their young people should learn about this fundamental subject.

History is, to be sure, more controversial than other academic disciplines, especially when it comes to spelling out what *all* youngsters in an entire state should know about it. Some readers of this report will likely disagree with some of Dr. Saxe's evaluations, perhaps even with some of the criteria that he and his advisors applied to the standards that they reviewed. So be it. Academic standards, in our view, ought to be subjects of analysis, discussion, refinement, and revision. That process is aided by external reviews such as Dr. Saxe has conducted. It would be a fine thing if others would conduct reviews as well. It would be even finer if the states would heed these reviews in revising, improving, and, where necessary, creating standards for history and other subjects.

Revision (or initiation) is what most state history standards need. In fact, the lesson that emerges most clearly from this and its companion appraisals of state academic standards is that no American parent or taxpayer should relax just because his state says it has produced standards. What we are learning is that most such standards are vague, content-free, or otherwise woefully inadequate.

We are grateful indeed to Dr. Saxe for the care and attention that he has lavished on this project. He taught history in public schools from 1974 to 1985, and since 1989 has been a professor of education at Penn State University. He is a member of the Pennsylvania State Board of Education. (One measure of his objectivity is the low marks he gives the Keystone State's progress to date in writing history standards.) He has been the editor of the

Social Studies Yearbook, co-editor of the *Handbook on Teaching Social Issues*, and is author of numerous articles on the history of social studies and history education, including the first book-length history of these fields.

We also thank the five distinguished historians who advised Dr. Saxe throughout this project, both with the development of criteria for his appraisal and in their application. Every state with standards worthy of review benefited from scrutiny by at least one of those advisors, as well as by Professor Saxe.

In addition to published copies, this report (and its companion appraisals of state standards in other subjects) is available in full on the Foundation's web site: http://www.edexcellence.net. Hard copies can be obtained by calling 1-888-TBF-7474 (single copies are free). The report is not copyrighted and readers are welcome to reproduce it, provided they acknowledge its provenance and do not distort its meaning by selective quotation.

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The Thomas B. Fordham Foundation is a private foundation that supports research, publications, and action projects in elementary/secondary education reform at the national level and in the vicinity of Dayton, Ohio. Further information can be obtained from our web site or by writing us at 1015 18th Street N.W., Suite 300, Washington, D.C. 20036. (We can also be e-mailed through our web site.) In addition to David Saxe and his advisors, I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Foundation's program manager, Gregg Vanourek, as well as staff members Irmela Vontillius and Michael Petrilli, for their many services in the course of this project, and Robert Champ for his editorial assistance.

Chester E. Finn, Jr., President
Thomas B. Fordham Foundation
Washington, D.C.
February 1998

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Most Americans recognize that knowledge of history is essential for informed citizenship. That's the main reason that the President and governors made history one of the five core subjects in the national goals that emerged from the 1989 Charlottesville education "summit." That's also why so much attention focused on the feckless national history standards issued in 1994: Americans take history seriously and become irate when it is handled badly—and when youngsters turn out not to know much of it.

For these reasons, many states have drafted standards for what their young people should know and be able to do in history in the primary and secondary schools. This report appraises those standards for 37 states and the District of Columbia. The remaining 13 states do not have history standards, are still writing (or revising) them, or declined to make them available for inspection.

The author, working with a panel of distinguished advisers, created and applied 15 criteria by which to judge the quality and utility of state history standards.

In most states, history is part of the loosely defined field known as "social studies." Many states do not identify history as a school subject in its own right and only a few have adopted history-centered social studies. Despite these challenges, the historical content of the state's standards was analyzed wherever it could be found in discernible form.

Assessment Criteria

The review criteria are clustered in five categories:

A. Clarity: How well are the standards written?

1. Standards are clear and measurable.
2. Standards describe what is to be taught and learned.
3. Standards are coherent and demanding.
4. Students are expected to learn important and specific facts, events, individuals, and issues.

B. Organization: How are standards organized and linked to state assessments?

5. Standards are presented on a grade-by-grade basis.
6. State history tests are (or could be) based on the standards.

C. Historical Soundness: What is the nature and quality of history found in the standards?

7. History is based on chronology.
8. Standards reflect solid, warranted historical knowledge.
9. History is kept in context and standards avoid presentism.
10. Students are encouraged to develop and apply historical skills.
11. Students are encouraged to understand and use primary and secondary sources.

D. Historical Content: Are specific studies of United States, European, and world history found in the standards?

12. Standards include specific studies in United States history.
13. Standards include specific studies in European and world history.

E. Absence of Manipulation: Do standards avoid manipulation, bias, indoctrination, and/or inappropriate applications of history?

14. Standards avoid promoting political or social dogma.
15. Standards avoid manipulating student feelings or attitudes.

Standards were analyzed by the project director and by external reviewers. A four-point rating scale was used:

3 = criterion fully met at each level (elementary, middle, high school)
2 = criterion met in at least two of three levels
1 = criterion met at only one level
0 = criterion not met
? = impossible to tell whether a criterion was met. (For purposes of scoring, a "?" was the same as a zero.)

After raw scores and frequency scores were added, a total of 60 points was available. Raw scores are the actual points earned against the 15 criteria. Frequency scores are used to judge how often a state met or partially met each of the 15 criteria. These were converted to letter grades, which also carry descriptive values indicating the utility of a state's standards.

A = "exemplary"
B = "notable"
C = "useful"
D = "marginally useful"
F = "useless"

Most states do not have good history standards. Barely a third of those reviewed received grades of C or better. Virginia, California, Texas, and Massachusetts had the best history standards.

Conclusions

Most states do not have good history standards. Barely a third of those reviewed received grades of C or better. Virginia, California, Texas, and Massachusetts had the best history standards.

Only Virginia's met nearly all criteria. The Old Dominion's standards are clear, measurable, descriptive of what is to be taught and learned, demanding, and quite specific about history content. This analysis found Virginia's to be the nation's benchmark history standards at the present time.

Closely following Virginia are California, Texas, and Massachusetts. After these four, the quality and completeness of state history standards drops sharply, all the way down to Nebraska, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania, which received zeroes.

The vast majority of states have a long way to go when it comes to setting a standard of excellence for history education. Thus, we suspect that many American schoolchildren, except for those who happen to live in a few exceptional jurisdictions, are being shortchanged of their own and the nation's heritage.

NATIONAL REPORT CARD

State History Standards (Maximum Score = 60)

State (in alphabetical order)	Score	Grade
Alabama	34	C
Alaska	6	F
Arizona	—	N
Arkansas	2	F
California	55	B
Colorado	21	D
Connecticut	26	C
Delaware	14	F
District of Columbia	32	C
Florida	28	C
Georgia	24	D
Hawaii	—	N
Idaho	—	N
Illinois	16	F
Indiana	32	C
Iowa	—	N
Kansas	8	F
Kentucky	4	F
Louisiana	27	C
Maine	19	D
Maryland	12	F
Massachusetts	49	B
Michigan	15	F
Minnesota	4	F
Mississippi	—	N
Missouri	2	F
Montana	—	N
Nebraska	0	F
Nevada	—	N
New Hampshire	27	C
New Jersey	0	F
New Mexico	2	F
New York	14	F
North Carolina	4	F
North Dakota	—	N
Ohio	18	D
Oklahoma	21	D
Oregon	—	N
Pennsylvania	0	F
Rhode Island	—	N
South Carolina	—	N
South Dakota	—	N
Tennessee	21	D
Texas	53	B
Utah	26	C
Vermont	8	F
Virginia	59	A
Washington	14	F
West Virginia	30	C
Wisconsin	16	F
Wyoming	—	N

State (by rank)	Score	Grade
Virginia	59	A
California	55	B
Texas	53	B
Massachusetts	49	B
Alabama	34	C
Indiana	32	C
District of Columbia	32	C
West Virginia	30	C
Florida	28	C
Louisiana	27	C
New Hampshire	27	C
Connecticut	26	C
Utah	26	C
Georgia	24	D
Colorado	21	D
Oklahoma	21	D
Tennessee	21	D
Maine	19	D
Ohio	18	D
Illinois	16	F
Wisconsin	16	F
Michigan	15	F
Delaware	14	F
New York	14	F
Washington	14	F
Maryland	12	F
Kansas	8	F
Vermont	8	F
Alaska	6	F
Kentucky	4	F
North Carolina	4	F
Minnesota	4	F
Arkansas	2	F
Missouri	2	F
New Mexico	2	F
Nebraska	0	F
New Jersey	0	F
Pennsylvania	0	F
Arizona	—	N
Hawaii	—	N
Idaho	—	N
Iowa	—	N
Mississippi	—	N
Montana	—	N
Nevada	—	N
North Dakota	—	N
Oregon	—	N
Rhode Island	—	N
South Carolina	—	N
South Dakota	—	N
Wyoming	—	N

Grading Scale: A= Exemplary, B = Notable, C = Useful, D = Marginally Useful, F = Useless, N = Not Included

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INTRODUCTION

Good standards clearly identify what is to be taught and learned. They send a strong signal to teachers, parents, textbook authors, test-developers, software designers, and others, a signal not only about what students are supposed to learn and be able to do, but also about what is *important* for them to know. Good standards should set clear expectations for learning. Good standards act as a promise of educational opportunity by assuring that all students will have similar access to challenging and worthwhile educational content, no matter where they live.

In most states, history is is part of a loosely defined field known as "social studies." In analyzing standards, it was often difficult to separate out history from the social studies.

History in the Schools

The national goals adopted by President Bush and the 50 state governors at the 1989 Charlottesville Summit specifically recognized history as part of the academic core curriculum. Most Americans recognize that knowledge of history is essential for informed citizenship. Long before there was an organized system of public education, Thomas Jefferson commended the study of history for all citizens. As reflected in its absence from the United States Constitution, however, Jefferson and his fellow founders agreed that education was to be a responsibility of the states. The states' success in developing high quality history standards is thus a major education issue.

The Purpose of this Project

The standards for 37 states and the District of Columbia are analyzed here. The remaining 13 states do not have history standards, are still writing them, or declined to make them available for inspection. The author, working with a panel of distinguished advisers, created and applied criteria by which to appraise the quality and utility of state history standards.

This report does not prescribe a universal formula for state history standards, nor does it propose what content, skills, and activities should be in every state's standards. Instead, its strategy is to define benchmarks that are associated with excellence in history standards, explain why these benchmarks are valuable, and assess state history standards according to those benchmarks.

Separating History from Social Studies

In most states, history is part of a loosely defined field known as "social studies." In analyzing standards, it was often difficult to separate out history from the social studies. Many states do not identify history as a school subject in its own right, and only a few (such as Alabama, California, Massachusetts, and Virginia) have adopted a history-centered framework for social studies as a whole. Some states acknowledge history as one of four primary areas of study (the others are typically economics, geography, and government/civics), but most states either give history only token attention or bury it in an amorphous mass of social studies. Despite these challenges, whether a state labeled its standards as history, social studies, or something else, the historical content found in the state's standards was analyzed for this study so long as it could be found in some discernible form.

Documents Studied

With a few exceptions, the study included those standards that were obtainable by May 31, 1997. If a state made substantial revisions after that date, the most recent version was reviewed when possible. The standards documents reviewed were those commonly available from state departments of education and readily accessible to any citizen.

States Not Included

Thirteen states did not have K-12 standards for history or social studies and are not included in this study: Arizona (standards for social studies on hold), Hawaii (standards not fully developed), Idaho (standards in development), Iowa (no state standards), Mississippi (standards in development), Montana (standards in development), Nevada (standards in development), North Dakota (beginning standards process), Oregon (standards in development), Rhode Island (working on standards), South Carolina (standards in development), South Dakota (continuing standards process), and Wyoming (standards in development).

CRITERIA FOR ASSESSMENT

The criteria for appraisal are briefly listed below. Detailed explanations and definitions, including positive and negative examples drawn from selected state standards, follow the discussion of results.

The review is based on 15 criteria clustered in five categories:

A. Clarity: How well are the standards written?

1. Standards are clear and measurable.
2. Standards describe what is to be taught and learned.
3. Standards are coherent and demanding.
4. Students are expected to learn important and specific facts, events, individuals, and issues.

B. Organization: How are standards organized and linked to state assessments?

5. Standards are presented on a grade-by-grade basis.
6. State history tests are (or could be) based on standards.

C. Historical Soundness: What is the nature and quality of history found in the standards?

7. History is based on chronology.
8. Standards reflect solid, warranted historical knowledge.
9. History is kept in appropriate contexts and standards avoid presentism.
10. Students are encouraged to develop and apply historical skills.
11. Students are encouraged to understand and use primary and secondary sources.

D. Historical Content: Are specific studies of United States, European, and world history found in the standards?

12. Standards include specific studies in United States history.
13. Standards include specific studies in European and world history.

E. Absence of Manipulation: Do standards avoid elements of manipulation, bias, indoctrination, and/or inappropriate applications of history?

14. Standards avoid promoting political or social dogma.
15. Standards avoid manipulating student feelings or attitudes.

PROCEDURES

A thorough search was conducted to identify states with history or social studies standards. Standards were then analyzed by the project director and sent to external reviewers for independent assessment based on agreed-upon criteria. The external reviewers were Herman Belz, Professor of History at the University of Maryland; Jeffrey T. Fouts, Professor of Education at Seattle Pacific University; Walter McDougall, Pulitzer Prize winning Professor of History at the University of Pennsylvania; and Jeffrey Mirel, Professor of Education at Northern Illinois University. In addition, John Patrick Diggins, Distinguished Professor of History at the Graduate School, City University of New York, read and commented on drafts of this report.

Using his own and external reviewer ratings and comments and critical suggestions by outside readers, the project director then established the final scores. A four-point rating scale was used:

3 = criterion fully met at each level (elementary, middle, high school)
2 = criterion met in at least two of three levels
1 = criterion met at only one level
0 = criterion not met
? = impossible to tell whether a criterion was met (a ? score = zero for purposes of scoring)

A maximum score of 3 was possible for each of the 15 criteria, yielding a potential top raw score of 45. Although the zero score and question mark (?) each resulted in no points, it is important to distinguish between those standards that failed to meet a criterion and those for which no meaningful information was available by which to assess whether it met that criterion. Sometimes, the standards themselves simply do not provide enough information about whether a state has met a particular criterion.

One exception was made for the criterion pertaining to assessment. If the standards did not reveal this information, but it was known from other sources that the standards were connected to a state test, points were awarded accordingly. All other scoring was based exclusively on information contained within the standards documents themselves.

To assist readers interested in seeking out viable history standards or improving those they have, *descriptive values* were joined to letter grades. While the letter grades indicate the overall quality of state standards, the descriptive values indicate their utility.

After *raw scores* (found in Table 7) and *frequency scores* (found in Table 3) were added, a total of 60 points was then available. The actual scores fell into five general groupings to which final letter grades and descriptive values (found in Table 8) were assigned as follows:

A = "exemplary" Model worthy of emulation
B = "notable" Contains many excellent standards
C = "useful" Contains many good standards
D = "marginally useful" Contains some good standards
F = "useless" Little practical value for application or benchmarking

Following the reporting of results in Tables 1-8, each of the 15 criteria is briefly discussed, together with positive and negative examples drawn from actual state standards documents. Appendix A contains state-specific results along with brief reviewer comments.

DEFINITIONS

Raw scores are the actual points earned against the 15 criteria. Table 7 lists the raw scores by state. Tables 5 and 6 list raw scores for the 15 criteria grouped by cluster.

Frequency scores are used to judge how often a state met or partially met each of the 15 criteria. States not only earned points for meeting a particular criterion (as found in raw scores), but also were rewarded for their standards' completeness. Thus, although a state may earn relatively few points across the 15 criteria, it could gain points for at least partially meeting many criteria. The *frequency scores* made available an additional 15 points.

Tables 3 and 4 reflect the number of points received for at least partially meeting the 15 criteria.

Descriptive value is a normative judgment attached to scores derived from the combination of raw and frequency scores. Final tabulation numbers (Table 8) yield both a letter grade and a *descriptive value* indicating the utility of standards to teachers, students, parents, curriculum specialists, and assessment efforts.

TABLE 1. STATE RAW SCORES
(Maximum Score = 45)

State (in alphabetical order)	Score
Alabama	24
Alaska	3
Arizona	—
Arkansas	1
California	40*
Colorado	12
Connecticut	16
Delaware	9
District of Columbia	19
Florida	15
Georgia	15
Hawaii	—
Idaho	—
Illinois	9
Indiana	18
Iowa	—
Kansas	5
Kentucky	3
Louisiana	14
Maine	12
Maryland	7
Massachusetts	34
Michigan	10
Minnesota	2
Mississippi	—
Missouri	1
Montana	—
Nebraska	0
Nevada	—
New Hampshire	17
New Jersey	0
New Mexico	1
New York	8
North Carolina	3
North Dakota	—
Ohio	10
Oklahoma	12
Oregon	—
Pennsylvania	0
Rhode Island	—
South Carolina	—
South Dakota	—
Tennessee	12
Texas	38
Utah	14
Vermont	4
Virginia	44
Washington	8
West Virginia	17
Wisconsin	10
Wyoming	—

TABLE 2. STATE RAW SCORES
(Maximum Score = 45)

State (in rank order)	Score
Virginia	44
California	40*
Texas	38
Massachusetts	34
Alabama	24
District of Columbia	19
Indiana	18
New Hampshire	17
West Virginia	17
Connecticut	16
Florida	15
Georgia	15
Louisiana	14
Utah	14
Colorado	12
Oklahoma	12
Maine	12
Tennessee	12
Ohio	10
Michigan	10
Wisconsin	10
Delaware	9
Illinois	9
New York	8
Washington	8
Maryland	7
Kansas	5
Vermont	4
Kentucky	3
North Carolina	3
Alaska	3
Minnesota	2
Arkansas	1
Missouri	1
New Mexico	1
Nebraska	0
New Jersey	0
Pennsylvania	0
Arizona	—
Hawaii	—
Idaho	—
Iowa	—
Mississippi	—
Montana	—
Nevada	—
North Dakota	—
Oregon	—
Rhode Island	—
South Carolina	—
South Dakota	—
Wyoming	—

* California scores combine both "California Draft Standards" and *California History-Social Science Framework*

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TABLE 3. STATE FREQUENCY SCORES (Maximum Score = 15)

State (in alphabetical order)	Score
Alabama	10
Alaska	3
Arizona	—
Arkansas	1
California	15
Colorado	9
Connecticut	10
Delaware	5
District of Columbia	13
Florida	13
Georgia	9
Hawaii	—
Idaho	—
Illinois	7
Indiana	14
Iowa	—
Kansas	3
Kentucky	1
Louisiana	13
Maine	7
Maryland	5
Massachusetts	15
Michigan	5
Minnesota	2
Mississippi	—
Missouri	1
Montana	—
Nebraska	0
Nevada	—
New Hampshire	10
New Jersey	0
New Mexico	1
New York	6
North Carolina	1
North Dakota	—
Ohio	8
Oklahoma	9
Oregon	—
Pennsylvania	0
Rhode Island	—
South Carolina	—
South Dakota	—
Tennessee	9
Texas	15
Utah	12
Vermont	4
Virginia	15
Washington	6
West Virginia	13
Wisconsin	6
Wyoming	—

TABLE 4. STATE FREQUENCY SCORES (Maximum Score = 15)

State (in rank order)	Score
California	15
Massachusetts	15
Texas	15
Virginia	15
Indiana	14
District of Columbia	13
Florida	13
Louisiana	13
West Virginia	13
Utah	12
Alabama	10
Connecticut	10
New Hampshire	10
Colorado	9
Georgia	9
Oklahoma	9
Tennessee	9
Ohio	8
Illinois	7
Maine	7
New York	6
Washington	6
Wisconsin	6
Delaware	5
Maryland	5
Michigan	5
Vermont	4
Alaska	3
Kansas	3
Minnesota	2
Arkansas	1
Kentucky	1
Missouri	1
New Mexico	1
North Carolina	1
Nebraska	0
New Jersey	0
Pennsylvania	0
Arizona	—
Hawaii	—
Idaho	—
Iowa	—
Mississippi	—
Montana	—
Nevada	—
North Dakota	—
Oregon	—
Rhode Island	—
South Carolina	—
South Dakota	—
Wyoming	—

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TABLE 5. RAW SCORES GROUPED BY CLUSTER

State (in alphabetical order)	Clarity	Organization	History	US/World Content	Absence of Manipulation	Total Points
Alabama	7	6	5	6	0	24
Alaska	1	2	0	0	0	3
Arizona	—	—	—	—	—	—
Arkansas	1	0	0	0	0	1
California	11	6	13	6	4	40
Colorado	2	2	4	2	2	12
Connecticut	3	1	10	0	2	16
Delaware	0	3	6	0	0	9
District of Columbia	6	1	7	4	1	19
Florida	4	3	4	2	2	15
Georgia	2	6	5	2	0	15
Hawaii	—	—	—	—	—	—
Idaho	—	—	—	—	—	—
Illinois	2	3	2	2	0	9
Indiana	5	3	5	3	2	18
Iowa	—	—	—	—	—	—
Kansas	3	2	0	0	0	5
Kentucky	0	3	0	0	0	3
Louisiana	4	1	5	2	2	14
Maine	3	3	5	1	0	12
Maryland	1	3	1	2	0	7
Massachusetts	8	4	12	6	4	34
Michigan	3	3	4	0	0	10
Minnesota	0	0	2	0	0	2
Mississippi	—	—	—	—	—	—
Missouri	1	0	0	0	0	1
Montana	—	—	—	—	—	—
Nebraska	0	0	0	0	0	0
Nevada	—	—	—	—	—	—
New Hampshire	4	3	8	2	0	17
New Jersey	0	0	0	0	0	0
New Mexico	1	0	0	0	0	1
New York	3	3	1	1	0	8
North Carolina	0	3	0	0	0	3
North Dakota	—	—	—	—	—	—
Ohio	4	3	1	0	2	10
Oklahoma	6	1	4	1	0	12
Oregon	—	—	—	—	—	—
Pennsylvania	0	0	0	0	0	0
Rhode Island	—	—	—	—	—	—
South Carolina	—	—	—	—	—	—
South Dakota	—	—	—	—	—	—
Tennessee	1	4	5	2	0	12
Texas	10	6	12	5	5	38
Utah	4	3	4	2	1	14
Vermont	1	1	2	0	0	4
Virginia	12	6	14	6	6	44
Washington	1	0	6	1	0	8
West Virginia	5	5	5	2	0	17
Wisconsin	1	1	6	2	0	10
Wyoming	—	—	—	—	—	—
	Max. = 12	Max. = 6	Max. = 15	Max. = 6	Max. = 6	Max. = 45

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TABLE 6. TOP SCORES BY CLUSTER

Clarity		Organization		History		US/ World Content		Absence of Manipulation	
Virginia	12	Alabama	6	Virginia	14	Alabama	6	Virginia	6
California	11	California	6	California	13	California	6	Texas	5
Texas	10	Georgia	6	Massachusetts	8	Massachusetts	6	California	4
Massachusetts	8	Texas	6	Texas	12	Viginia	6	Massachusetts	4
Alabama	7	Virginia	6	Connecticut	10	Texas	5		
Oklahoma	6			New Hampshire	8	District of Columbia	4		
District of Columbia	6			District of Columbic	7				
Max. = 12		Max. = 6		Max. = 15		Max. = 6		Max. = 6	

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TABLE 7. RAW SCORES FOR ALL CRITERIA

(— = Not Rated)

State	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	Total
Alabama	1	2	2	2	3	3	3	2	?	0	0	3	3	?	?	24
Alaska	0	1	0	0	1	?	?	0	?	1	0	0	0	0	0	3
Arizona	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Arkansas	0	1	0	0	0	?	0	0	?	0	0	0	0	?	?	1
California	2	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	2	2	3	3	2	2	40
Colorado	0	1	0	1	2	?	1	0	?	0	3	1	1	1	1	12
Connecticut	1	1	1	0	1	?	2	1	1	3	3	0	0	2	?	16
Delaware	0	0	0	0	0	3	1	1	?	2	2	0	0	?	?	9
District of Columbia	1	2	1	2	1	?	1	2	1	2	1	2	2	?	1	19
Florida	1	1	1	1	3	?	1	1	2	0	?	1	1	1	1	15
Georgia	0	1	1	0	3	3	2	1	?	0	2	1	1	?	?	15
Hawaii	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Idaho	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Illinois	0	1	1	0	0	3	0	0	?	1	1	1	1	?	?	9
Indiana	1	1	1	2	3	?	2	1	1	1	0	2	1	1	1	18
Iowa	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Kansas	1	2	0	0	2	?	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	?	?	5
Kentucky	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	?	0	0	0	0	?	?	3
Louisiana	1	1	1	1	1	?	1	1	?	1	2	1	1	1	1	14
Maine	0	2	0	1	3	?	0	1	?	2	2	1	0	?	?	12
Maryland	0	0	0	1	0	3	0	0	1	0	0	1	1	?	?	7
Massachusetts	2	2	2	2	1	3	2	3	2	3	2	3	3	2	2	34
Michigan	1	2	0	0	0	3	0	0	?	2	2	0	0	?	?	10
Minnesota	0	0	0	0	0	?	0	0	?	1	1	0	0	?	?	2
Mississippi	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Missouri	0	1	0	0	0	?	0	0	?	0	0	0	0	?	?	1
Montana	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Nebraska	0	0	0	0	0	?	0	0	?	0	0	0	0	?	?	0
Nevada	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
New Hampshire	1	2	1	0	0	3	2	2	?	3	1	1	1	?	?	17
New Jersey	0	0	0	0	0	?	0	0	?	0	0	0	0	?	?	0
New Mexico	0	1	0	0	0	?	0	0	?	0	0	0	0	?	?	1
New York	1	0	1	0	0	3	0	1	?	?	?	1	0	1	?	8
North Carolina	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3
North Dakota	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Ohio	1	1	1	1	3	?	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	1	10
Oklahoma	2	2	1	1	1	?	2	1	?	1	0	1	0	?	?	12
Oregon	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Pennsylvania	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Rhode Island	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
South Carolina	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
South Dakota	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Tennessee	0	1	0	0	1	3	1	1	?	1	2	1	1	?	?	12
Texas	2	3	2	3	3	3	3	2	2	2	3	2	3	2	3	38
Utah	1	1	1	1	3	?	1	?	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	14
Vermont	0	1	0	0	1	?	0	0	?	1	1	0	0	?	?	4
Virginia	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	2	3	3	3	3	44
Washington	0	1	0	0	0	?	1	1	?	2	2	1	0	?	?	8
West Virginia	1	2	1	1	2	3	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	?	?	17
Wisconsin	0	1	0	0	1	?	?	0	?	3	3	1	1	?	?	10
Wyoming	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—

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TABLE 8. RANK ORDER OF STATES BY FINAL GRADE

State (in rank order)	Final Grade	Raw + Frequency = Total Score	Utility
Virginia	A	44 + 15 = 59	Exemplary
California	B	40 + 15 = 55	Notable
Texas	B	38 + 15 = 53	Notable
Massachusetts	B	34 + 15 = 49	Notable
Alabama	C	24 + 10 = 34	Useful
District of Columbia	C	19 + 13 = 32	Useful
Indiana	C	18 + 14 = 32	Useful
West Virginia	C	17 + 13 = 30	Useful
Florida	C	15 + 13 = 28	Useful
Louisiana	C	14 + 13 = 27	Useful
New Hampshire	C	17 + 10 = 27	Useful
Connecticut	C	16 + 10 = 26	Useful
Utah	C	14 + 12 = 26	Useful
Georgia	D	15 + 9 = 24	Marginally Useful
Colorado	D	12 + 9 = 21	Marginally Useful
Oklahoma	D	12 + 9 = 21	Marginally Useful
Tennessee	D	12 + 9 = 21	Marginally Useful
Maine	D	12 + 7 = 19	Marginally Useful
Ohio	D	10 + 8 = 18	Marginally Useful
Illinois	F	9 + 7 = 16	Useless
Wisconsin	F	10 + 6 = 16	Useless
Michigan	F	10 + 5 = 15	Useless
Delaware	F	9 + 5 = 14	Useless
New York	F	8 + 6 = 14	Useless
Washington	F	8 + 6 = 14	Useless
Maryland	F	7 + 5 = 12	Useless
Kansas	F	5 + 3 = 8	Useless
Vermont	F	4 + 4 = 8	Useless
Alaska	F	3 + 3 = 6	Useless
Kentucky	F	3 + 1 = 4	Useless
North Carolina	F	3 + 1 = 4	Useless
Minnesota	F	2 + 2 = 4	Useless
Arkansas	F	1 + 1 = 2	Useless
Missouri	F	1 + 1 = 2	Useless
New Mexico	F	1 + 1 = 2	Useless
Nebraska	F	0 + 0 = 0	Useless
New Jersey	F	0 + 0 = 0	Useless
Pennsylvania	F	0 + 0 = 0	Useless
Arizona	—	—	—
Hawaii	—	—	—
Idaho	—	—	—
Iowa	—	—	—
Mississippi	—	—	—
Montana	—	—	—
Nevada	—	—	—
North Dakota	—	—	—
Oregon	—	—	—
Rhode Island	—	—	—
South Carolina	—	—	—
South Dakota	—	—	—
Wyoming	—	—	—

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DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

The results of this analysis indicate that most states do not have quality history standards. Only 13 of 38 standards received grades of C or better. This result may lead some to think that if states have poor quality history standards, the quality of their history instruction must also be poor. Continuing with this line of reasoning, given poor teaching, the actual history learned by school children (if any at all) must also be very weak. While there is some evidence to support such reasoning, this report did not examine, and reaches no conclusions about, teacher or student performance.

The results of this analysis indicate that most states do not have quality history standards. Only 13 of 38 standards received grades of C or better.

Still, if good standards are important for high quality instruction and learning, it is important to ascertain their quality. Given this assumption, it is reasonable to expect that high quality history standards meet criteria across five clusters: writing, presentation, history basics, specifics in American and world history, and the absence of manipulation. In the final analysis, Virginia, California, Texas, and Massachusetts had the highest point values, scores that suggest that these states' standards are of high quality. Nebraska, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania all received zeroes, indicating that their standards are of the lowest quality. Most states, though, are somewhere in between, and with careful attention the majority could surely improve their ratings.

Virginia was the only state whose standards met nearly all criteria. The Old Dominion's standards are clearly written, measurable, and descriptive of what is to be taught and learned. They are also coherent, demanding, and very specific about history content. They are based on chronology, reflect solid and warranted history, keep history in context, avoid presentism, and encourage students to develop and practice historical skills, including the use of primary and secondary sources. The Virginia standards avoid the promotion of dogma and refrain from manipulating student attitudes. Finally, Virginia's standards are centered on specific historical content from United States and world history. Virginia wasn't the model from which other standards were assessed, but this research found Virginia's standards to be the nation's "exemplary" benchmark for history standards at the present time.

Closely following Virginia are California (where our analysis combined the 1995 "California Draft Standards" and the highly regarded *California History/Social Science Framework*), Texas, and Massachusetts. After these four, the quality and completeness of state history standards drop sharply.

In reviewing states' scores, one can spot a clear division between states that take the responsibility to assert leadership in promoting history as the means to deliver information and develop skills for effective American citizenship, and states that delegate this responsibility to local districts or choose to apply a social studies model for citizenship. The distinction between state standards meant as mandated guidelines for local districts and those meant to be flexible or advisory is important. No analysis between state and local standards was conducted, however, so it is possible that local districts meet (or exceed) state standards.

Most states have chosen a "social studies" model that employs ten "teaching strands" and other ideas developed by the National Council for the Social Studies. For the most part, these models are incoherent and lack direction when it comes to history. With the exception of Texas (whose standards are centered on social studies concepts), scores from "social studies" states are much lower than those from history-centered states.

A few states divide citizenship content and skills among history, geography, government, and economics. Save for Massachusetts (whose standards also follow this scheme), scores for states using this approach are not as high as for those that use history as the core subject.

California and Virginia focus on history itself, and they rank highest in the nation. Alabama (which also places history at the center of its social studies standards) contains sufficient (if not excellent) coverage of historical content, but little development of historical skills or applications. With attention to these deficits, Alabama's standards would rank among the best in the nation.

Except for Texas, Massachusetts, and Alabama, states that follow the social studies model or divide citizenship education among four subject areas fare worse in this analysis of state history standards. Perhaps that's not surprising. But those states that leave all substantive decisions to districts or schools receive the fewest points of all.

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This section provides specific descriptions of the 15 criteria, along with positive and negative examples drawn from state standards documents.

Cluster A: Clarity and Writing

Criterion 1: Standards are clear and measurable.
Criterion 2: Standards describe what is to be taught and learned.
Criterion 3: Standards are coherent and demanding.
Criterion 4: Students are expected to learn important facts, events, individuals, and issues.

Taken as a group, these four criteria outline qualities that any high-quality academic standards should possess. The first step toward quality standards is that teachers know what they are expected to teach and students know what they are expected to learn. To accomplish this, not only must the language be sufficiently clear, but performance in relation to the standard must also be measurable. To have any traction, standards must be coherent and demanding. Standards that are murky, overbroad or vaguely written, and not tied to content, are standards that beg to be ignored.

Criterion 1: Standards are clear and measurable

Clarity implies description without jargon, active verb use, specific content and skills, and precise language. Clear standards begin with verbs such as "list," "describe," "compare/contrast," "identify," "explain," "cite," "demonstrate," "illustrate," "draw," "build," "critique," "interpret," "assess," and "analyze." These action verbs should be directly connected to historical content and skills.

Standards have little value unless they provide the means to determine whether they have been met. While the standard does not itself prescribe particular assessments, it must be testable. High quality standards signal what evidence is required to demonstrate their attainment and lend themselves to being measured with fair precision.

Criterion 2: Standards describe what is taught and learned

Good standards make plain to teachers what should be taught and learned. Given the standard, teachers should be able to develop curricula and lessons that impart particular content and skills. Standards should also provide students and parents with information on what content and skills are to be mastered.

Criterion 3. Standards are coherent and demanding

Coherent standards build upon prior knowledge and skills. Understanding history requires sequential acquisition of particular skills and the accumulation of information. High quality standards are arranged in measured steps with information and skills that are presented, practiced, and assessed over time. Standards not presented sequentially or "graded" do not deserve to be considered coherent.

When standards are designed with sequencing in mind, teachers become fully aware of what must be accomplished before a student can progress. As historical study continues and deepens, students also become aware of the need to master fundamental knowledge and skills. Demanding standards introduce skills and content to children at a particular grade that will eventually be required for further learning in later grades. Standards that are demanding reach high, expect more, and challenge students and teachers to work hard and persevere. Such standards also signal to teachers and students the importance of learning history. History does matter.

Criterion 4: Standards expect students to learn important facts, events, individuals, and issues

Standards should imply that students will master a common body of knowledge. Standards that lack content specifics tend to lack clarity, are more prone to be misread (and mistaught and mislearned), are more difficult to assess, and generally end up being dismissed by teachers and students as unimportant or unworkable. Standards that lack content specifics also tend to mislead parents as to what actually is taught in schools.

The first sign that a set of standards is weak is that it specifies no content. To be viable, history standards must (at least) signal what historical information is important, what events are pivotal (and worth remembering), what accomplishments of individuals, groups, and societies must be remembered, what decisions are notable, and what issues are seminal.

Each of these areas contains a historical dimension, a context in the past, significance in the present, and potential for the future. While no one set of facts or interpretations can be considered complete or sufficient for acquiring historical perspective and knowledge, it is helpful if students operate from a common historical narrative, a narrative that is open-ended, accessible to all, and faithfully prepared with a strong measure of scholarly discipline.

Positive Example for Criteria 1 – 4

From Virginia's standards:

> The student will compare the Charters of the Virginia Company of London, the Virginia Declaration of Rights, the Virginia Statute of Religious Freedom, the Declaration of Independence, the Articles of Confederation, and constitutions of the United States and Virginia, as amended, with emphasis on their treatment of: fundamental political principles including constitutionalism and limited government, rule of law, democracy and republicanism, sovereignty, consent of the governed, separation of powers, checks and balances and federalism . . . [Virginia Standards, Grade Seven]

The first thing to be noted here is that specific content is used. In becoming familiar with the founding political documents, students are asked to compare certain ideas. This seems a daunting task for any adult, let alone a seventh grader; yet when earlier standards are also examined, it is clear that students would have prepared for this work. Since kindergarten, Virginia students have been developing historical skills. They have also been exposed to these documents in various forms as well as to the history connected to them.

The standard is centered in core content. [Meets Criterion 4.] This standard (when viewed together with earlier standards) satisfies the need for clarity and is measurable. [Meets Criterion 1.] Teachers know what they should be teaching, students know exactly what should be learned (e.g., students should be able to define each of the terms listed, provide examples from the various documents, and show differences and similarities in the uses of terms in the various documents). [Meets Criterion 2.] The standard is coherent (its content and skills are sequentially placed) and certainly demanding. [Meets Criterion 3.]

Negative Example for Criteria 1 – 4

From Wisconsin's standards:

> [The student will] employ cause-and-effect arguments to demonstrate how significant events have influenced the past and present in United States and world history. [Wisconsin Standards, End of Eighth Grade Cluster]

To attain this standard, students would first have to be familiar with "cause-and-effect" argumentation. This implies that a student has already mastered this skill. However, no such preparation is found either in the lower grades or within this grade level. It is simply assumed that students can "employ" the skill. [Fails to meet Criterion 3.]

The next problem with this standard is determining what a "significant event" is and how a student might demonstrate its "influence" within the context of the past and the present. [Fails Criterion 4.] Attaining this standard requires sophisticated historical research skills as well as extensive understanding of history. Furthermore, if no particular event is identified as significant, how would students come to recognize something as significant or recognize how significant events influence contemporary contexts and the future?

While it is clear that students are to use "cause-and-effect arguments" and to "demonstrate how significant events influence the past and present," it is not evident how or when students will have acquired the skills necessary to accomplish these things or the content necessary to apply the skills. [Fails to meet Criterion 1.]

As for measurability, the standard is vague and assumes too much. [Fails to meet Criterion 2.]

In sum, particular content and skills are not highlighted in the standard, nor is it evident how they will be taught, practiced, and assessed. No preparatory standards have been established at lower levels. The standard does not imply a core body of knowledge. What qualifies as a significant event is not established. Simply stating that students will somehow apply historical skills to ambiguous "significant events" may be useful as an exit goal, but absent a core body of knowledge or criteria as to how one might identify historical events as significant, the standard is wide open to interpretation (and failure): hence the standard cannot be assessed. [Fails to meet Criteria 1-4.]

Cluster B: Organization of History Standards

Criterion 5: Standards are presented grade-by-grade (or clustered by grades).

Once historical content has been determined and skills identified, a coherent plan is needed for the sequential and cumulative presentation of standards. This is best done on a grade-by-grade basis or in grade clusters. Such a presentation permits periodic stops to assess student progress, for teachers to assess their own work and that of students, and for parents to gain a sense of their children's accomplishments.

Teachers view standards that are not presented sequentially and cumulatively as unusable. It is understandable that states with strong traditions of local control over curricula may wish for individual school systems to determine the specific course of study. Yet standards that outline a progression of key knowledge, skills, and dispositions are not the same as a curriculum. Although standards identify what students are expected to know and be able to do,

schools remain free to choose the methods and materials to meet these standards.

Standards that are presented grade-by-grade (or in manageable grade clusters) permit teachers and parents to know what is expected. They help teachers, students, and parents to see what should have been mastered in earlier grades as well as what can be expected in the future. This information can be extremely valuable in spotting problems (as well as recognizing success) with either the curriculum or individual students.

Positive Example of Criterion 5

Utah standards are organized on a grade-by-grade basis until 7th grade; thereafter they are organized by course. At a glance it is easy to examine standards at every level. [Meets Criterion 5.]

Negative Example of Criterion 5

Nebraska presents a K-12 "social studies framework" that lists some "belief statements" and 13 "goals." There is also a list of 10 themes with some description of each, but no specific standards are presented, nor does the document provide specific information on how these "belief statements," "goals," or "themes" might be organized by grade or grade cluster. [Fails to meet Criterion 5.]

Criterion 6: State history assessments are based on state history standards.

We have not examined state tests or assessment systems. This criterion simply notes whether or not a state *claims* that its history standards are connected to a state test. Since information on state testing was not apparent in many of the standards reviewed, scores for this criterion were based in part on state-reported information about tests that is provided in the American Federation of Teachers' report, *Making Standards Matter* (1997).

Standards not tied to testing are practically meaningless. If students are not accountable for learning specific content, skills, and dispositions, then we cannot assume that such learning will take place. Teachers cannot be held accountable for teaching standards if there is no mechanism to ensure that the content, skills, and dispositions found in standards have been learned. Testing makes standards work. Positive scores for this criterion do not, however, imply that current state testing instruments are valid or appropriate measures of student accomplishments.

Cluster C: Historical Soundness

Criterion 7: History is based on chronology.

History is both literally what happened in the past and what has been written about the past. Whether we delve into the past from the present or dip into a period from a distant point and move toward the present, the past unfolded in some sequence, people lived a certain number of years, events happened in time and over time. Chronology provides the story line of history.

For children, who well understand the concept of beginning, middle, and end, history as chronology makes intuitive sense. A story line can be filled in with people, events, causes, ideas, consequences, dates, and much more. The best way to understand the past is to teach it in sequence. This allows children to recognize change and continuity as well as notions of time and past (four central principles of history study).

To meet Criterion 7, (1) chronology had to be introduced, defined, and explained as an idea that events happen(ed) in temporal sequence; and (2) historical content had to be presented in chronological order.

Positive Examples of Criterion 7

From Texas's standards:

Example 1

The student understands the concept of time and chronology. The student is expected to (a) distinguish among past, present, and future; (b) create a calendar or timeline; and (c) use vocabulary related to chronology, including yesterday, today, and tomorrow. [Texas, Grade 1]. . . . The student is expected to (a) describe the order of events by using designations of time periods such as ancient and modern times; (b) use vocabulary related to chronology, including past, present, and future; and (c) describe and measure calendar time by days, weeks, months, and years. [Texas, Grade 2] . . . . The student is expected to (a) use vocabulary related to chronology, including ancient and modern times and past, present, and future times; (b) create and interpret timelines; and (c) describe historical times in terms of years, decades, and centuries. [Texas, Grade 3]

This expansion of chronological history continues throughout the Texas standards. [Meets requirement 1 of Criterion 7.]

Example 2

The student understands traditional historical points in U.S. history from 1877 to the present. The student is expected to: (a) identify the major eras in U.S. history from 1877 to the present and describe their defining characteristics; (b) apply absolute and relative chronology through the sequencing of significant individuals, events, and time periods; and (c) explain the significance of the following dates: 1898, 1914 – 1918, 1929,

1941 – 1945, and 1957. [Texas, high school, U.S. History]

From this example, it is evident that historical content is presented in sequence for Texas, U.S., and world history. [Meets requirement 2 of Criterion 7.]

Negative Example of Criterion 7

From Missouri's standards:

In the Missouri standards for "social studies," there is no meaningful reference to chronological skills. [Fails to meet requirement 1 of Criterion 7.] There is also no chronological presentation of content. [Fails to meet requirement 2 of Criterion 7.] There is a vague reference in Standard 2 to chronology: "In social studies, students in Missouri public schools will acquire a solid foundation which includes knowledge of continuity and change in the history of Missouri, the United States, and the world. . . ." Impressive sounding as that may be, it supplies no information that might assist teachers, students, or parents to understand what it actually entails or how it is connected to learning chronology. [Fails to meet Criterion 7.]

Criterion 8: Standards Reflect Solid and Warranted History

The history presented to children should be based upon accurate and reliable evidence. Teachers (and historians) have a responsibility to demonstrate scholarly discipline in the preparation and presentation of lessons that includes a strong sense of skepticism, open-mindedness, and determination to present accurate accounts of the past.

Standards with historical content should provide opportunities for students to learn about the nature of evidence, bias, and the making and testing of valid interpretations. Standards with historical content should demonstrate an appreciation of the discipline required to engage in competent historical work. They should also signal that the process of historical research yields evidence that increases our understanding of the past.

While the National History Standards have been heavily criticized, their "standards in historical thinking" have remained viable guides for standards-setters. State standards should reflect similar ideas about chronological thinking, historical comprehension, historical analysis and interpretation, historical research capabilities, and historical issues-analysis and decision-making (National Center for History in the Schools, *National Standards for History: Basic Edition*, 1996). To fully meet Criterion 8, the qualities noted here must be found in standards.

Positive Examples of Criterion 8

To demonstrate what is required to meet Criterion 8 (perhaps the most important of this analysis), four examples from the Massachusetts Standards are provided.

Example 1 (from introduction to standards)

Students will acquire the ability to form answerable questions, to collect, evaluate, and employ information from primary and secondary sources, and apply it in oral and written presentations; they will understand the . . . many kinds and uses of evidence; and by comparing competing historical narratives, they will differentiate historical fact from historical interpretations or points of view. [Massachusetts Learning Standard 3]

Example 2 (from Pre K-4 standards)

Students will explain the difference between statements of fact and statements of opinion and between factual and fictional scenes. They understand what evidence is, and some of its uses. They describe different kinds of evidence we have from both Native American and English settlements in Massachusetts and explain what that tells us about life among each people. [Massachusetts PreK-4 Learning Standard 3]

Example 3 (from middle and high school standards)

Students explain differences in the points of view in historical accounts of controversial events. Students understand ways of finding and testing evidence from societies leaving no written records. [Massachusetts Grades 5-8 Learning Standard 3]. Students understand how various historical interpretations can vary according to prevailing orthodoxies of the period of their writing. Students compose a research paper using conflicting primary sources, and explain the degree to which they are able, or unable, to establish which is the more credible source. [Massachusetts Grades 9-10 Learning Standard 3].

Example 4 (from upper high school standards)

Students recognize the need to identify and account for partisan pleading in competing accounts of the past. Students weigh the usefulness and relative credibility of newspaper accounts of an historical event against those of eyewitnesses and of historians writing after that time. [Massachusetts Grades 11-12 Learning Standard 3]

From these examples spanning the primary and secondary grades, it is evident that Massachusetts displays the historical soundness required for Criterion 8.

Negative Example of Criterion 8

From Maryland's standards:

Maryland's standards make no specific references or provide any details regarding the nature of history or identifying what might be warranted history. There are also no standards for development of historical skills. In the Introduction/ Rationale of the United States History section, a statement is included that "students should also be able to compare points of view and apply multiple perspectives to negotiate and reach consensus with others as needed to facilitate responsible decision-making." Note that it's not important to seek truth from "multiple perspectives," but rather to "negotiate" and "reach consensus." There is no attempt to instill truth-seeking as an important goal or to insist that the study of history rests upon warranted facts and necessary skills. [Fails to meet Criterion 8.]

Criterion 9: History is kept in appropriate contexts and standards avoid presentism.

Presentism is the practice of looking at the past through present-day sensibilities. For students of history, however, the point should be to understand what life was like in the past and to gain an appreciation of the past in the context of the times. Judging past events and people by standards of the present may be widespread, but, if we are truly to understand the past, we need to try to see it through the eyes of those who lived in the past, thus gaining historical perspective.

To meet criterion 9, (1) specific attention must be given to ensuring that students are aware of presentism as something to avoid in studying history; and (2) the standards themselves refrain from presentist interpretations.

Positive Example of Criterion 9

From the District of Columbia's standards:

In the D.C. standards, a set of graded standards is provided for "use [of] varied methods, resources, and critical habits of mind in research and writing." The standards are thorough and useful, specifically calling upon students to work "with many sources—original documents, artifacts, interviews, textbooks and monographs, the press—[to] weigh evidence and make judgments." A number of excellent standards are included, signaling that Washington's standards are serious about seeing issues in appropriate historical contexts. For example:

> [I]dentify and explain observed examples of present-mindedness or ethnocentrism, such as the temptation to judge people in the past solely by current attitudes and personal or group perspectives, rather than by broadly based moral and ethical standards drawn from the inclusive study of history and ideas. [Standard 5, Grade 11]

Taken in context with earlier standards, it seems evident that present-mindedness isn't viewed by D.C. standards-setters as an appropriate way to view the past. [Meets requirement 1 of Criterion 9]

Negative Example of Criterion 9

From New York's standards:

> Students will respect and practice basic values, including respect for self and others (Regents Goal 5). But accomplishing this goal is not simple. Throughout history there have been events inconsistent with basic American values. Tolerance for practices such as the Nazi Holocaust, totalitarianism, chattel slavery, the subjugation of peoples, and the infringement of human rights are [sic] not acceptable. They must be studied in historical context, but evaluated within a values perspective. [Dimensions of Teaching and Learning: 5, Multiculturalism and Multiple Perspectives]

Good standards highlight the problem of presentism and offer opportunities for students to learn about the past in its own context. The New York standards do just the reverse. Asking students to study the past "within a values perspective" as a precondition to the study of history invites presentism.

Applications of present-day sensibilities to the past may easily confuse and divert students from understanding people and their times. For example, understanding that slavery was a way of life in the Roman Empire is essential for understanding Rome. Applying a "values perspective" that depicts Romans as evil because they owned slaves seriously distracts students from gaining an understanding of Roman history.

Students who are taught about and practice "basic American values" will readily recognize historical events that are inconsistent with principles enunciated by the Founders. Given such instruction, there would be no need for applying today's "values perspectives" to the past. Without clear guidance on the avoidance of presentism, the New York standards do not satisfy the criterion. [Fails to meet requirements 1 and 2 of Criterion 9.]

Criterion 10: Students are encouraged to develop and apply historical skills.

The development of historical skills is essential for students to understand and appreciate history. They should be introduced to comprehension, analysis and interpretation,

research methods, issues-analysis, and decision-making. More specifically, they should be called upon to do such things as "distinguish between past, present, and future time," "draw upon data in historical maps," "evaluate major debates among historians," "obtain historical data," and "identify issues and problems in the past."

To fully meet Criterion 10, standards must (1) present and develop historical skills and applications over the various grades; and (2) encourage students to use these skills while doing historical research.

Positive Examples of Criterion 10

From New Hampshire's standards:

Example 1

Students will demonstrate the ability to employ historical analysis, interpretation, and comprehension to make reasoned judgments and to gain an understanding, perspective, and appreciation of history and its uses in contemporary situations. [New Hampshire Curriculum Standard 16]

Example 2 (standards that highlight skills for K-6)

Locate events in time—past, present, and future—by using basic chronological concepts including calendars, elapsed time, and story sequence (beginning, middle, end). Construct time lines of significant historical events in their community, state, and nation. . . . Demonstrate an understanding that people, artifacts, and documents represent links to the past and that they are sources of data from which historical accounts are constructed. . . . Display historical perspective by describing the past through the eyes and experiences of those who were there, as related through their memories, literature, diaries, letters, debates, arts, maps, and artifacts. . . . Recognize the difference between fact and conjecture and between evidence and assertion. Frame useful questions in order to obtain, examine, organize, evaluate, and interpret historical information. Use basic research skills to investigate and prepare a report on a historical person or event. [Curriculum Standard 16: End-of-Grade 6]

Example 3 (standards that highlight skills by 10th grade)

In addition to the above [for End-of-Grade 6], students will be able to construct and interpret parallel time lines on multiple themes. Group events by broadly defined eras in the history of the state, nation, and area under study. Analyze historical documents, artifacts, and other materials for credibility, relevance, and point of view. . . . Use historical materials to trace the development of an idea or trend across space or over a prolonged period of time in order to identify and explain patterns of historical continuity and change. Develop and implement research strategies in order to investigate a given historical topic. Critically analyze historical materials in order to distinguish between the important and the inconsequential and differentiate among historical facts, opinions, and reasoned judgments. . . . Explain, using examples from history, that not all problems have clear-cut solutions. . . . Utilize knowledge of the past and the processes of historical analysis to carry out historical research; make comparisons, develop and defend generalizations; draw and support conclusions; construct historical explanations, narratives, and accounts; solve problems; and make informed decisions. [Curriculum Standard 16: End-of-Grade 10]

It is evident that New Hampshire standards encourage the development of historical skills and practice in historical research. [Meets requirements 1 and 2 of Criterion 10.]

Negative Examples of Criterion 10

From Georgia's standards:

"Georgia's Quality Core Curriculum" for social studies is a long and cumbersome document. It includes a graded presentation of "social studies skills" that may be loosely connected to history instruction. Yet as presented, the skills are completely separated from historical content and research.

Example 1 (standards for lower grades)

[The student] (21) Relates cause and effect relationships among events and dates. (22) Relates the past to the present in the study of change and continuity in human affairs. (23) Makes use of the time system and calendar. (24) Arranges in chronological order, a series of experiences, e.g. personal timeline, family timeline, etc. [Georgia Standards, Grade 2-3, Time and Chronology]

Example 2 (standards for middle and high school)

After introducing a skill in a lesson, the development of that skill should become an integral part of the process used to teach the concept . . . [the student should] (1) Locate main ideas in multiple types of sources (e.g., nonprint, specialized references, periodicals, newspapers, atlases, yearbooks, government publications, etc.) (2) Take notes and develop outlines through reading, listening, or viewing. (3) Use features of books for information: table of contents, glossary, index, appendix, bibliography. (4). Distinguish between fact and opinion relating to regions/cultures. [Georgia Standards, Grade

7, Social Studies Skills] [The student should] demonstrate how the historian gathers and interprets data. [Georgia Standards, Social Studies–United States History (9-12) Social Studies Content/Concepts 1]

While it appears that the spirit of Criterion 10 is found in many of these standards, the standards ultimately fail to meet this criterion. The standards for skill development are separated from history and students are asked to do things like "relate cause and effect relationships," but are not instructed to use any historical research skills to accomplish this. Also, there are no standards to indicate that students have been introduced to or called upon to practice those skills. Sound ideas are presented (or buried) in the "Quality Core Curriculum," but finding how they all relate to introducing, practicing, and mastering historical research skills within the context of history content is never made clear. On this count it cannot be assumed that historical skills and historical research are specifically encouraged. [Fails to meet Criterion 10.]

Criterion 11: Students are encouraged to understand and use both primary and secondary sources.

In learning historical skills, students must eventually become familiar with primary and secondary sources. Students do not fully appreciate the difference between the two without guided instruction. The identification, analysis, application, and assessment of primary and secondary sources relate both to skills development and to content acquisition. Such sources are the basic building blocks of history.

To meet Criterion 11 fully, standards must (1) differentiate between primary and secondary sources; (2) provide opportunities to use and apply both primary and secondary sources; and (3) encourage the use of such sources within the context of specific historical content.

Positive Examples of Criterion 11

From Texas's standards:

Example 1

The student is expected to differentiate between, locate, and use primary and secondary sources such as computer software; interviews, biographies, oral, print, and visual material; and artifacts to acquire information about the United States and Texas. [Texas Standard 22, Grade 4]

Example 2

(B) [T]he student is expected to analyze information by sequencing, categorizing, identifying cause-and-effect relationships, comparing, contrasting, finding the main idea, summarizing, making generalizations and predictions, and drawing inferences and conclusions; (C) organize and interpret information in outlines, reports, databases, and visuals including graphs, charts, timelines, and maps. [Texas Standard 25, Grade 5]

Although primary and secondary sources are introduced in fourth grade, Texas standards have prepared students to meet this standard by thoughtful consideration of "sources" in the earlier grades. Since kindergarten, Texas students have been specifically exposed to a number of sources and, through measured increments, asked to demonstrate more complex skills. In meeting requirements 1-3 for Criterion 11, Texas standards (1) ask students to understand the differences between primary and secondary sources; (2) provide opportunities for students to be trained in the use of primary and secondary sources, and (3) encourage students to use such sources within content study. [Meets Criterion 11.]

Negative Example of Criterion 11

From New York's standards:

Students should understand changing and competing interpretations of historical developments. To demonstrate this understanding at each level [elementary, intermediate, commencement] they might. . . [d]evelop hypotheses about important events, eras, or issues; move from chronicling to explaining events and issues; use information collected from diverse sources (e.g., diaries, census reports, city directories and maps, newspapers and journal accounts, graphs and charts, cartoons, autobiographies, government documents, and other primary and secondary sources) to produce cogently written reports and document-based essays; apply the skills of historiography by comparing, contrasting, and evaluating the interpretations of different historians of an event, era, or issue. [New York Standards, I.D, Commencement]

Although there are references to "sources," at no point are students actually asked to learn how to distinguish between primary and secondary sources, to understand when and how each might be used in studying or writing about history, or to practice using both kinds of sources. New York standards fail on all three requirements. [Fails to meet Criterion 11.]

Cluster D: Specific Historical Content

Criterion 12: Standards include specific studies in United States history.

Criterion 13: Standards include specific studies in European and world history.

The heart of any history standards for American schools is the specific inclusion of United States history. Most states require that U.S. history be taught to every child in public schools. The reason for its inclusion is directly tied to the belief that American history provides the foundation for competent citizenship. In addition to learning about the evolution of such important ideas as democracy, freedom, and equality, the study of American history also has a civic mission. In order for young citizens to understand the political, social, and economic dimensions of their world and the relationship of the United States to other nations, it is imperative to understand the main lines of American history, including its European antecedents. The story behind our common culture, language, institutions, and customs is found in our past. It is expected that every state will provide a truthful and meaningful accounting of American history.

To meet Criteria 12 and 13, specific United States, European, and world history must be stipulated in the body of the standards. The term "specific" means that important individuals and events are named, teachers are held responsible for teaching about such individuals and events, and students are held responsible for knowing about them.

Positive Examples of Criteria 12 and 13

From California's standards (similar references are also found in the *California History-Social Science Framework*):

Example 1 (standard for U.S. history, people, themes, and events)
Tell the story of Jamestown settlement and the establishment of a plantation economy. . . Describe the story of John Winthrop and the Puritans, their religious beliefs, educational system and institutions of self-government; and the influence of such dissenters as Roger Williams and Anne Hutchinson. [California Standards, Standard 3, Grade 5]

Example 2 (standard for U.S. history)
[T]he student will demonstrate an understanding of major political, social, economic, and cultural developments of the 1920s . . . describe the conditions that led to the Harlem Renaissance and study examples from its literature, music, and art (e.g., Zora Neale Hurston, Langston Hughes, Duke Ellington, Laura Wheeler Waring. [California Standards, Standard 4, Grade 11]

Example 3 (standard for European history, elementary)
The student will demonstrate an understanding of the development of the Roman Republic and the spread of the Roman Empire . . . [by] demonstrat[ing] an understanding of "Pax Romana" and the reign of Augustus. Describe the social and political conditions of Rome at the time. [California Standards, Standard 7, Grade 6]

Example 4 (standard for European history, high school)
The student will identify the sources and describe the development of democratic principles in Western Europe and the United States. . . . [A]fter examining major documents (such as the Declaration of Independence, the Constitution of the United States, the English Bill of Rights, the Declaration of the Rights of Man, or the Universal Declaration of Human Rights) for specific democratic principles they contain, the student makes a comparison chart showing how certain principles appear in these documents. [California Standards, Standard 3, Grade 10]

It is evident that provisions for the inclusion of specific content from American, European, and world history are found in California state standards. [Meets Criteria 12 and 13.]

Negative Example of Criteria 12 and 13

From Illinois's standards:

Understand the roles and influences of individuals and interest groups in the political systems of Illinois, the United States, and other nations. . . . [I]dentify the roles of civic leaders (e.g., elected leaders, public service leaders) [Illinois Standards, State Goal 14, Standard D, 1]. . . . Understand events, trends, individuals and movements shaping the history of Illinois, the United States and other nations. . . . Describe the contributions of key individuals and groups to significant turning points in United States economic history since 1900 (e.g., Great Depression, New Deal, and Great Society). [Illinois Standards, State Goal 16, Standard B.3c]

The Illinois standards mention elements from United States, European, and world history, but only in general terms. Note that the word "individual" is used, yet no individuals are named. These sections are vague about individuals and quickly shift from the idea of "key

individuals" to a few events (without reference to any "key individuals").

For European/world history, the Illinois standards are, again, not specific. Given such standards as "[d]escribe the contributions of key individuals and significant turning points in world economic history, 1500-present," the notion of "individuals" and "significant turning points" is too vague for teachers or students to make much sense of. Without specific content information, students will have little clue as to what should be studied and remembered. [Fails to meet Criteria 12 and 13.]

Cluster E: Absence of Manipulation

It isn't enough for history standards to be well written, to present necessary historical skills, and to be truthful. History must also avoid being slanted or propagandistic. What separates a quality history program from a poor one is that students in a quality program are given the skills, dispositions, and information necessary to make independent, informed decisions and to acquire wisdom from their historical study.

It isn't enough for history to be well written, to present necessary historical skills, and to be truthful. History must also avoid being slanted or propagandistic.

Programs that deliberately attempt to impart particular political dogmas or social ideologies have no place in public education. Programs that attempt to persuade students to think and act according to some political or social agenda overstep the bounds of proper public education. Programs should not attempt to predispose children to somebody's political causes or social agenda.

It is wrong when events, issues, or personalities of the past are used for the express purpose of manipulating student feelings or attitudes. It is particularly distasteful if the intent is also to mask information that might lead students to greater understanding of the past. It is essential that pupils be given opportunities to weigh historical evidence so they don't blindly accept particular conclusions. Standards that reflect "neutrality" toward complex and controversial events and ideas are favored over those that project predetermined conclusions.

Criterion 14: Standards avoid teaching political/social dogma.

To fully meet Criterion 14, standards must (1) provide statements that recognize the danger of dogma and demonstrate that measures to counteract such influences are included; and (2) themselves omit examples of political and social dogma.

Positive Examples of Criterion 14:

From Massachusetts's standards:

Example 1 (introductory note to teachers)

[Teachers] ought to give sustained, consistent attention to distinguish among the following: knowledge (judgment verified, proven, demonstrated, or confirmed by evidence); informed opinion (judgment supported by evidence); uninformed or mere opinion (belief without evidence); bias and prejudice (belief in spite of contravening evidence); scapegoating and stereotyping (prejudice based in radical and unfair oversimplification); open mindedness (receptive to new evidence); narrow mindedness (receptiveness only to evidence in favor of one's opinions, special pleading); and closed mindedness (unwilling to seek, heed, or listen to evidence). [Section III. Reflection, Research, and Content in History and Social Science]

Example 2 (specific information to all teachers K-12)

[Students need to know] how to distinguish knowledge from various forms of opinion; how to minimize avoidable error; how to identify valid and fallacious arguments; how to test hypotheses; how to identify and avoid bias and prejudice; how and how not to compare present and past and infer lessons from the past; how to distinguish sound generalizations from false oversimplifications. . . . [Section III]

Students will acquire the ability to form answerable questions, to collect, evaluate, and employ information from primary and secondary sources, and apply it in oral and written presentations; they will understand the many kinds and uses of evidence; and by comparing competing historical narratives, they will differentiate historical interpretations or points of view [Learning Standard 3: Research, Evidence, and Point of View]

These examples indicate that students will be given the necessary knowledge and tools to become aware of political and social dogma. [Meets Criterion 14, Requirement 1 (Requirement 2 is to be free from political and social dogma—no example cited).]

Negative Example of Criterion 14

From Delaware's standards:

> Students will develop an understanding of pre-industrial United States history and its connections to Delaware history including: Three worlds meet (Beginnings to 1620). [History Standard Four, 6-8]

Apart from the impossibility of teaching, learning, and assessing this standard, the inclusion of the "Three worlds meet" statement is highly suspect. The notion that the United States was founded as a result of West Africans, Indians, and Europeans "meeting" is a presentist theory unsupported by the historical record.

The foundation of the United States was first and foremost the project of European settlers and their native-born descendants. The standard also ignores research that defines America's foundation as a contest among the Indians, French, and English. Without clear examples and qualifications to this theory, sets of standards containing the quoted statement may promote dogma, and be guilty of manipulating student attitudes. Given the statement as it stands (without qualifications or explanations), and the fact that there is nothing in the Delaware standards indicating that political and social dogma should be avoided, the standards fail both aspects of Criterion 14.

It is perhaps an unfortunate truism that Americans learn more "history" from Hollywood than from textbooks or lectures in school.

Criterion 15: Standards avoid manipulating student feelings or attitudes.

To fully meet Criterion 15, standards must not attempt to manipulate student feelings or attitudes. Standards must also avoid stacking, slanting, or withholding information or skills that might lead students to better understand the past.

Positive Examples of Criterion 15

From Virginia's standards:

Example 1

The Virginia standards are arguably the most content/skills rich history standards in the nation. When content is presented, students are not given pre-set conclusions, but are asked to "analyze and explain" particular events and/or the impact of historical events. When examining "the impact of immigration on American life," students are asked to "analyze" "contributions of immigrant groups and individuals; and ethnic conflict and discrimination." [Virginia Standards 11.7]

Example 2

Virginia standards ask students to "compare the colonization of Virginia with that of other American colonies in terms of motivation of ethnic, religious, and other immigrants and their influences on the settlement of colonies; economic activity, political developments, and social customs, the arts, and religious beliefs [Virginia Standards 11.2]." Virginia standards also ask students to "identify causes, key events, and effects of the Civil War and Reconstruction, with emphasis on economic and philosophical differences between the North and South, as exemplified by men such as Daniel Webster and John C. Calhoun; . . . [and] leaders of both sides of the war including Abraham Lincoln, Ulysses S. Grant, Jefferson Davis, Robert E. Lee, Frederick Douglass, and William Lloyd Garrison." [Virginia Standards 5.7]

The Virginia standards make certain that facts, not political or social slants, dictate the history presented. No evidence was found that students' feelings or attitudes were manipulated. [Meets Criterion 15.]

Negative Example of Criterion 15

From Alaska's standards:

> "A student should understand historical themes through factual knowledge of the time, place, ideas, institutions, cultures, people, and events." [History Standard B] One of the examples listed to achieve this standard is to "[w]atch films about the American West produced from the early to the late 20th century (e.g., *Broken Arrow, Little Big Man, Dances with Wolves*). Analyze the images of Native Americans portrayed in the films."

It is perhaps an unfortunate truism that Americans learn more "history" from Hollywood than from textbooks or lectures in school. History teachers are besieged with students who have embraced "historical" films such as *JFK, Gandhi,* and *Malcolm X* as unassailable truth. Film companies and commercial publishers have also sought to influence schools by providing "curricular materials" created to promote the movie, not historical background for what is depicted on film. The most appalling recent examples are the television mini-series *Roots* and Steven Spielberg's *Amistad.*

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The activity suggested in Alaska's standards and the films listed imply (at best) a lack of understanding of the importance and complexity of historical study. Hollywood takes an historical account, smoothes out the difficult parts, and presents a perfect story (beginning, middle, and end) all within two hours, none of which remains very historical.

The first part of the example provides some vague direction for studying history, but using Hollywood films to study or "analyze" any part of the past is questionable. With the abundance of original documents, biographies, oral histories, textbooks, and documentary films available, the proper use of Hollywood films is to highlight how filmmakers ignore, alter, or abandon the historical record in order to tell the story they have scripted.

All three of the films listed offer idealized or fictionalized accounts of the past that (when used as historical data) manipulate student feelings and attitudes toward the views of filmmakers, none of whom is an historian. *Little Big Man* and *Dances with Wolves* are two of the most manipulative "history-based" films produced in Hollywood over the past 30 years. They are completely unsuitable as "historical reference material." The principal characters of each film are fabricated and only portions of the films offer any warranted historical information. As presented, students would not be able to tell where the history begins or ends.

Films provide entertainment, even inspiration, but they do not substitute for historical instruction, documents, or careful research. Watching the films in question (and many others) may inform students about how Hollywood fictionalizes, stereotypes, and idealizes historical characters (and perhaps that is an important lesson), but these films should not be used as the basis for developing historical perspectives or knowledge about cowboys, soldiers, gunslingers, or Indians. [Fails to meet Criterion 15.]

AFTERWORD

This review makes plain that few states have high quality history standards. However, it is important to note that nearly all states have at least set out to write standards and, despite their generally weak performance to date, this high level of activity is a positive sign.

For education leaders seeking to improve state or local history standards, it is certainly possible to produce outstanding standards. Virginia has shown that history standards can be done well. California, Texas, and Massachusetts have also demonstrated how much can be accomplished when quality is the goal. Each of these states offers a different model for approaching the challenge of history education and all should be examined. Standards from Alabama, Florida, Indiana, Louisiana, New Hampshire, the District of Columbia, and West Virginia also have sections that warrant close inspection.

This review makes plain that few states have high quality history standards. However, it is important to note that nearly all states have at least set out to write standards and, despite their generally weak performance to date, this high level of activity is a positive sign.

Even when history standards are first-rate, however, their benefits cannot be realized without close alignment to other key variables, such as statewide assessments, curricular materials, sufficient resources, and redesigned teacher education and professional development. To succeed with education reform, teachers, curriculum specialists, administrators, school boards, legislators, citizens, and many others must give greater attention to supporting high quality standards.

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APPENDIX — NOTES ON INDIVIDUAL STATES

Author's Note: In identifying the state documents reviewed for this report, "status" indicates a document's official approval date by the State Board of Education, legislature, or other responsible body. Versions presented in draft form are listed by the date found on the document itself. If a draft did not provide a date, the one shown is the date when the document was obtained. Whether obtained electronically or by mail, we assumed that it was the latest—and thus appropriate—edition to review.

Key to State Report Cards

Clarity: How well are the standards written? *(12 points possible)*
Organization: How are standards organized and linked to state assessments? *(6 points possible)*
Historical Soundness: What is the nature and quality of history found in the standards? *(15 points possible)*
Historical Content: Are specific studies of United States, European, and world history found in the standards? *(6 points possible)*
Absence of Manipulation: Do standards avoid manipulation, bias, indoctrination, and/or inappropriate applications of history? *(6 points possible)*
Frequency: How often does a state meet (or partially meet) each of the criteria? *(15 points possible)*
Total Score: *60 points possible*

Alabama

Title: "Course of Study Social Studies"
Status: Draft, received December 1, 1997

The Alabama "Course of Study for Social Studies" is a long and complex document that makes a serious attempt to craft good standards. It places history and geography together at the center of the curriculum. There is a thorough, topical treatment of U.S. history for the 5th and 6th grades that ranks as the most comprehensive in the nation. The events, people, themes, issues, and dates of history (presented without comment or explanation) are, however, daunting and unrealistic. The same is true for the strict content approach toward world history in 7th, 8th, and 9th grades.

Surprisingly, for all the attention to content there is no sustained attention to the specific development of historical skills. No standards are presented for primary and secondary source applications, nor is there much attention to historical skills other than use of time lines to teach chronology. Teachers are warned to "maintain regular instructional emphases" to avoid presentism, but there are no standards that instruct students to avoid presentism.
The historical content is excellent but, because the standards lack congruence with skill development and application, the resulting curriculum is apt to be reduced to the dreaded "one damn fact after another" approach. The Alabama standards are impressive in content, but weak in application of that content.

STATE REPORT CARD

Alabama

CLARITY	7
ORGANIZATION	6
HISTORICAL SOUNDNESS	5
U.S./WORLD CONTENT	6
ABSENCE OF MANIPULATION	0
FREQUENCY	10
TOTAL SCORE (out of 60)	34
GRADE	C, useful

Alaska

Title: "Alaska Content Standards (History)"
Status: Draft, received August 4, 1997

Alaska's content standards for history are exceedingly brief and, in their present form, useless. The accompanying framework examples are meant to add content and skills. Unfortunately, these are superficial and flimsy. For example, "A student should understand that history is a record of human experiences that link the past to the present and the future." The claim is made that "a student who meets this standard should: understand chronological frameworks for organizing historical thought and be able to place significant ideas, institutions, people, and events within time sequences." While this appears admirable, there is no evidence that students would be able to identify "significant ideas" or be able to work with historical content in contexts. The activities listed for this standard are incoherent. One suggestion is to "interview relatives and write a personal timeline"; another is to "describe and present the family history in a picture timeline, drawings, or oral presentation." Again, these activities seem reasonable, yet there is no connection to learning any specific content or skills.

STATE REPORT CARD

Alaska

CLARITY	1
ORGANIZATION	2
HISTORICAL SOUNDNESS	0
U.S./WORLD CONTENT	0
ABSENCE OF MANIPULATION	0
FREQUENCY	3
TOTAL SCORE (out of 60)	6
GRADE	F, useless

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Arizona — No standards were available for review.

Arkansas

Title: "Curriculum Frameworks Social Studies"
Status: Draft, received May 20, 1997

The Arkansas standards-setters suggest that all "student learning" is "cumulative." However, historical content and skills are apparently not among the things that students are expected to learn. In effect, social studies is presented as a contemporary subject without much need for historical antecedents or skills. The "student expectations" listed are vague and unmeasurable. For example, "[Students will] explain the foundations and ideas of American political culture as set forth in basic documents, such as the Declaration of Independence, the Constitution, the Bill of Rights and others." Yet there are no explanations, activities, or clues as to how students in the fifth to eighth grades would be able to achieve this extremely broad standard.

Arkansas

CLARITY	1
ORGANIZATION	0
HISTORICAL SOUNDNESS	0
U.S./WORLD CONTENT	0
ABSENCE OF MANIPULATION	0
FREQUENCY	1
TOTAL SCORE (out of 60)	2
GRADE	F, useless

California

Title: "History-Social Science Standards"; *California History-Social Science Framework*
Status: "Standards" is the "draft interim" version, 1995
***Framework* approved in 1987 and renewed in 1996**

It is important to note that the standards reviewed are a draft, part of a standards-setting initiative begun in 1995. A state commission is presently writing new ones. Readers of the 1995 draft standards are urged to use them in conjunction with the *History-Social Science Framework* that was first approved in 1987, and has been used throughout the 1990s. That framework continues to be one of the most effective of its kind in the nation. However, it has limitations for assessment and other curricular uses since it was not crafted as a standards-type document. For purposes of this study, both the 1995 draft standards and the framework were analyzed.

There is much in both documents that warrants our attention. They are well-designed and easy to read. Future efforts should continue to include the user-friendly examples that accompany each standard. The documents include ample content for both U.S. and world history, and receive fairly high marks for writing and presentation. One caution: in future versions, attention should be given to eliminating manipulation of student feelings and attitudes.

California

CLARITY	11
ORGANIZATION	6
HISTORICAL SOUNDNESS	19
U.S./WORLD CONTENT	6
ABSENCE OF MANIPULATION	4
FREQUENCY	15
TOTAL SCORE (out of 60)	55
GRADE	B, notable

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Colorado

Title: *Colorado Model Content Standards for History*
Status: Adopted by State Board of Education, September 14, 1995

The Colorado standards are very broad, ostensibly to permit further "local" development. There is some guidance for teaching history, but it is more superficial than substantive. Much of the social studies-style history presented is a kind of "sociology for tots," barely recognizable as history but painfully thin. For example, "Students in grades 9-12 [should be able to] explain the historical significance of the economic system of the United States." Even with solid instruction, just how high school students of any level of ability and knowledge would be able to meet this standard is a mystery never resolved in these standards. To improve, a strong measure of specific content and skills connected to content should be infused throughout K-12.

Colorado

CLARITY	2
ORGANIZATION	2
HISTORICAL SOUNDNESS	4
U.S./WORLD CONTENT	2
ABSENCE OF MANIPULATION	2
FREQUENCY	9
TOTAL SCORE (out of 60)	21
GRADE	D, marginally useful

Connecticut

Title: "Social Studies Curriculum Framework"
Status: Draft, August 7, 1997

The Connecticut standards use the familiar division of history, civics and government, geography, and economics. The history section is further divided into four sound categories: historical thinking; local, United States and world history; historical themes; and applying history. Although these areas have explanations, the standards found within them are generally vague and lacking in specific content. For example, consider the impossibility of this standard: "Educational experiences in grades 5-8 will assure that students demonstrate an in-depth understanding of major events and trends of United States history (e.g., the American Revolution, the Civil War, industrialization, the Great Depression, and the cold war)." The strength of the standards is found in their attention to development of historical skills and the application of primary and secondary sources.

Connecticut

CLARITY	3
ORGANIZATION	1
HISTORICAL SOUNDNESS	10
U.S./WORLD CONTENT	0
ABSENCE OF MANIPULATION	2
FREQUENCY	10
TOTAL SCORE (out of 60)	26
GRADE	C, useful

Delaware

Title: "New Directions: Social Studies Curriculum Framework Content Standards"
Status: Draft, June 1996

The Delaware standards are divided along the four "core disciplines" of history, geography, economics, and civics. The history standards are superficial and contain little content. None of the (few) historical skills is grounded in historical contexts. Standards are also vague and unmeasurable as is evident in this example: "Students will develop an understanding of modern United States history, its connections to both Delaware and world history, including Civil War and Reconstruction (1850-1877)." That sort of comprehensive knowledge and understanding of events spanning U.S., Delaware, and world history is beyond the capacity of even the best students and the standard, accordingly, is unhelpful for purposes of instruction and assessment.

Delaware

CLARITY	0
ORGANIZATION	3
HISTORICAL SOUNDNESS	6
U.S./WORLD CONTENT	0
ABSENCE OF MANIPULATION	0
FREQUENCY	5
TOTAL SCORE (out of 60)	14
GRADE	F, useless

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District of Columbia

Title: "English Language Arts and History: Curriculum Framework"
Status: Draft, July 1996

Though a mere 17 pages, the District of Columbia standards include ample content for both U.S. and world history. Unfortunately, they are neither clear nor measurable, as is evident in this example: "Analyze the nature and importance of class conflict in the decline of the Roman empire." What passes as the "nature and importance" isn't explained, nor is "class conflict" or whatever passes for the "decline of the Roman empire." The latter point is extremely fuzzy without some chronological continuity found in specific instruction about Rome (which isn't offered here). These standards also lack any sort of orderly learning sequence. Almost no attention is given to learning about primary and secondary sources or the use of such sources in historical research.

STATE REPORT CARD

District of Columbia

CLARITY	6
ORGANIZATION	1
HISTORICAL SOUNDNESS	7
U.S./WORLD CONTENT	4
ABSENCE OF MANIPULATION	1
FREQUENCY	13
TOTAL SCORE (out of 60)	32
GRADE	C, useful

Florida

Title: Sunshine State Standards (Social Studies)
Status: Approved by State Board of Education, May 1996

The Florida standards are sensible and workable. But they are often overly broad and lacking in substantive content and direct connection between skills and historical contexts. Consider this example: "The student understands the world from its beginnings to the time of the Renaissance." On the plus side, this is one of the few standards documents that properly places (as the introduction of history to young children) the study of world and European history in advance of United States history.

STATE REPORT CARD

Florida

CLARITY	4
ORGANIZATION	3
HISTORICAL SOUNDNESS	4
U.S./WORLD CONTENT	2
ABSENCE OF MANIPULATION	2
FREQUENCY	13
TOTAL SCORE (out of 60)	28
GRADE	C, useful

Georgia

Title: "Georgia's Quality Core Curriculum (Social Studies)"
Status: Draft, received July 15, 1997

The Georgia standards are too long, overly detailed, and distracting in presentation. Their historical content and skills are scattered and incoherent. To be viable for curriculum and assessment development, these standards must be streamlined and reconceptualized.

STATE REPORT CARD

Georgia

CLARITY	2
ORGANIZATION	6
HISTORICAL SOUNDNESS	5
U.S./WORLD CONTENT	2
ABSENCE OF MANIPULATION	0
FREQUENCY	9
TOTAL SCORE (out of 60)	24
GRADE	D, marginally useful

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Hawaii — No standards were available for review.

Idaho — No standards were available for review.

Illinois

Title: "Illinois Learning Standards: Social Science"
Status: Draft, June 1997

The Illinois social science standards are organized with the stated intention of developing "citizens of a culturally diverse, democratic society in an interdependent world." Alas, this ambitious goal is seemingly to be achieved without benefit of serious historical study. Those standards that include historical matter are vague and unmeasurable. There is no specific historical content or integration of content with developing historical skills, as evident in this impossible standard: "Analyze the emergence and development of American and European capitalism and its institutions after 1500."

STATE REPORT CARD

Illinois

CLARITY	2
ORGANIZATION	3
HISTORICAL SOUNDNESS	2
U.S./WORLD CONTENT	2
ABSENCE OF MANIPULATION	0
FREQUENCY	7
TOTAL SCORE (out of 60)	16
GRADE	F, useless

Indiana

Title: *The Social Studies Proficiency Guide*
Status: 1996 Edition

The Indiana standards are among the longest (288 pages) of all standards reviewed. Although they are largely based upon social studies concepts, history remains prominent in all sections. The strongest part of the standards is their focus on specific content in U.S. and world history. The standards are easy to follow and the student activity examples are helpful. However, the standards are weak in clarity, measurability, and descriptiveness. Insufficient attention is paid to the use of primary and secondary sources as well as to helping students differentiate between history and propaganda.

STATE REPORT CARD

Indiana

CLARITY	5
ORGANIZATION	3
HISTORICAL SOUNDNESS	5
U.S./WORLD CONTENT	3
ABSENCE OF MANIPULATION	2
FREQUENCY	14
TOTAL SCORE (out of 60)	32
GRADE	C, useful

Iowa — Iowa does not intend to write state standards.

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Kansas

Title: *Kansas Curricular Standards for Social Studies*
Status: Approved by State Board of Education, February 9, 1996

There is evidence in the Kansas standards that students' "feelings" about contemporary issues are more important than their understanding of history. Those few standards relating to history are difficult to take seriously: "compare different interpretations of historical events, such as the Vietnam War, the American Revolution, and the Watergate affair" and "locate and describe the development of local government in the U.S. and its changes over time, e.g., New Amsterdam in the 1600's, 1700's, 1800's, and 1900's." With these standards, it is quite possible, even probable, that a student could go through a school's entire curriculum and never actually study the history of the United States.

Kansas

CLARITY	3
ORGANIZATION	2
HISTORICAL SOUNDNESS	0
U.S./WORLD CONTENT	0
ABSENCE OF MANIPULATION	0
FREQUENCY	3
TOTAL SCORE (out of 60)	8
GRADE	F, useless

Kentucky

Title: *Kentucky Learning Goals and Academic Expectations (Social Studies)*
Status: Adopted by State Board of Education, April 27, 1994

The Kentucky standards are a challenge to read and assess. The social studies standards are devoted to a thoroughly contemporary perspective on American life that seems divorced from all need for historical antecedents. Consider this example: "Create a collage showing how people from diverse cultures have influenced American history. Present the collage to the class." Although presented in a "know and be able to do" format, these standards make no demands on students to "know" any historical content or to "be able to do" any historical skills.

Kentucky

CLARITY	0
ORGANIZATION	3
HISTORICAL SOUNDNESS	0
U.S./WORLD CONTENT	0
ABSENCE OF MANIPULATION	0
FREQUENCY	1
TOTAL SCORE (out of 60)	4
GRADE	F, useless

Louisiana

Title: *Louisiana Social Studies Content Standards*
Status: Final Version, May 22, 1997

The Louisiana standards offer a sensible approach to history study. The generally positive "know and be able to do" statements are helpful, but specific content would greatly improve their value. Consider this cosmic example: "[Students should] describe the people, events, and ideas that were significant to the growth and development of our state and nation." It would also be very helpful if standards were established for developing historical skills within a content context.

Louisiana

CLARITY	4
ORGANIZATION	1
HISTORICAL SOUNDNESS	5
U.S./WORLD CONTENT	2
ABSENCE OF MANIPULATION	2
FREQUENCY	13
TOTAL SCORE (out of 60)	27
GRADE	C, useful

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Maine

Title: *State of Maine Learning Results (Social Studies)*
Status: Approved by State Legislature, May 1997

Maine's standards present history as one of four content areas of social studies. The history standards are simplistic and lacking in palpable content. Nineteen broad eras are suggested in which students are given the following vague assignment: "Identify and analyze major events and people." Some skills are included, but none leads to historical perspective or understanding.

Maine

CLARITY	3
ORGANIZATION	3
HISTORICAL SOUNDNESS	5
U.S./WORLD CONTENT	1
ABSENCE OF MANIPULATION	0
FREQUENCY	7
TOTAL SCORE (out of 60)	19
GRADE	D, marginally useful

Maryland

Title: Learning Outcomes (K-8), High School Core Learning Goals
Status: Approved by State Department of Education, September 1996

The Maryland standards are formulated at an exceedingly high level of generality, which, when not vacuous, call for the intellectual sophistication of a history professor. They are also doctrinaire—in a "big government" direction. For example, the only economic history seriously treated is the Progressive Movement, the New Deal, and the Great Society (presented in this order, as if nothing had happened before, between, or since these periods). The treatment of U.S. and world history is flimsy and superficial.

Maryland

CLARITY	1
ORGANIZATION	3
HISTORICAL SOUNDNESS	1
U.S./WORLD CONTENT	2
ABSENCE OF MANIPULATION	0
FREQUENCY	5
TOTAL SCORE (out of 60)	12
GRADE	F, useless

Massachusetts

Title: *History and Social Science Framework*
Status: Approved by State Board of Education, July 1997

Parts of the Massachusetts standards are very strong, and hard-headed revision may be able to concentrate on those parts and downplay the trendy and ephemeral. Over four months, the standards went through at least three editions, all hotly debated. The result of this process, perhaps not unexpected, is a "compromise" document that is wordy, overly complex, determinedly contemporary, and heavy with jargon. Along with solid and sensible history, the drafters produced a rhetorically inflated document ripe with political correctness and group identity pandering. These are significant shortcomings, but they are offset by historical information so rich that a good teacher may easily weed out the unnecessary and overworked parts.

Massachusetts

CLARITY	8
ORGANIZATION	4
HISTORICAL SOUNDNESS	12
U.S./WORLD CONTENT	6
ABSENCE OF MANIPULATION	4
FREQUENCY	15
TOTAL SCORE (out of 60)	49
GRADE	B, notable

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Michigan

Title: "Model Content Standards for Curriculum (Social Studies)"
Status: Draft, received May 21, 1997

Taking the familiar social studies division of subjects into "historical, economic, civics, and geographical" perspectives, the Michigan standards focus on "time and chronology," "comprehending the past," "analyzing and interpreting the past," and "judging decisions from the past." These categories are fine but, without specific historical content and skills, they do not make for good standards. The standards are impossible to convert into serious assessments. For example, the statement "All students will evaluate key decisions made at critical turning points in history by assessing their implications and long-term consequences" is vague, cosmic, and lacking in benchmarks of attainment.

STATE REPORT CARD

Michigan

CLARITY	3
ORGANIZATION	3
HISTORICAL SOUNDNESS	4
U.S./WORLD CONTENT	0
ABSENCE OF MANIPULATION	0
FREQUENCY	5
TOTAL SCORE (out of 60)	15
GRADE	F, useless

Minnesota

Title: "High Standards: Profile of Learning (Social Studies)"
Status: Draft, received May 21, 1997

There are 10 categories listed in these standards, but only one—"understand interaction between people and cultures"—has any connection to historical content or skills. Upon close examination, even it reveals no specific history content or skills. There is a reference to using "primary and secondary sources," but we have no clue whether students know what these are or have learned how to use them. For another telling example, consider the following: "[S]tudents should know the facts and sequences of historical events." Why it's important to know facts or sequences is never explained, nor are there any clues as to what historical events should be understood. There is nothing in these standards to assess, achieve, or master related to historical studies.

STATE REPORT CARD

Minnesota

CLARITY	0
ORGANIZATION	0
HISTORICAL SOUNDNESS	2
U.S./WORLD CONTENT	0
ABSENCE OF MANIPULATION	0
FREQUENCY	2
TOTAL SCORE (out of 60)	4
GRADE	F, useless

Mississippi — No standards were available for review.

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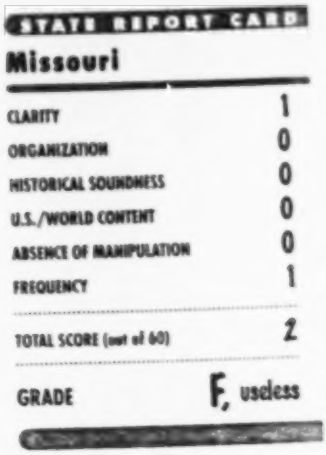
Missouri

Title: *The Show-Me Standards: Social Studies*
Status: Approved by State Board of Education, January 18, 1996

Missouri's so-called Show-Me Standards are virtually without substance. They are little more than seven very broad goals presented in a few words. For example, we are told that "Students will acquire the knowledge and skills to gather, analyze and apply information and ideas," but it is impossible to tell from these standards that this is a serious "goal." The standards offer no insight or understanding about how the schools of Missouri are actually to teach U.S. or world history or what the state's children are expected to know and be able to do.

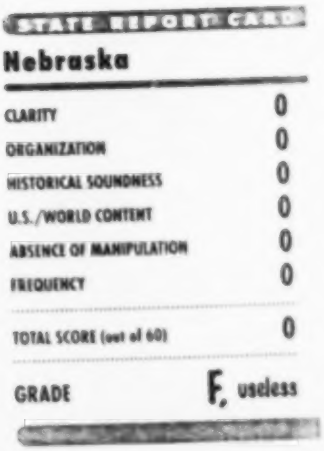


Montana — No standards were available for review.

Nebraska

Title: *A Strategic Plan for Social Studies in Nebraska*
Status: June, 1993 Version

These "standards" do not offer any roadmap whatsoever for the teaching or learning of history. Presented in terms of "belief statements" and "goals," there are no content or skills statements for history (or other social science disciplines). Several questions could form the beginnings of a history program, such as, "How have human beings in different societies acted and thought in the past?" But none of the questions is developed into a form usable for shaping curriculum or assessment.



Nevada — No standards were available for review.

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New Hampshire

Title: *New Hampshire K-12 Social Studies Curriculum Framework*
Status: Approved for state use, May 1996

The New Hampshire standards present history as one of four curricular areas in the social studies, the others being government, economics and geography. The standards are not presented by grade or grade cluster. That defect accounts for much of the low scores on clarity and organization. It is claimed that the standards are tied to state assessments, but without appropriate grade linkages or specific attention to historical skill development, the standards are impossible to assess. They could be improved greatly if more content-specific information (with congruent expectations) were developed for every grade. For example, the "end-of-grade" summaries are very good, but, as in the following example, specific content and skills are assumed or simply absent: "Discuss the on-going story of their [the students'] community, state, and nation in terms of the contributions of countless individuals." How is it possible to assess "countless individuals" when there is no agreement on who these individuals might be?

New Hampshire

CLARITY	4
ORGANIZATION	3
HISTORICAL SOUNDNESS	8
U.S./WORLD CONTENT	2
ABSENCE OF MANIPULATION	0
FREQUENCY	10
TOTAL SCORE (out of 60)	27
GRADE	C, useful

New Jersey

Title: *New Jersey Core Curriculum Content Standards for Social Studies*
Status: Approved by State Board of Education, May 1, 1996

These standards are of no value for curriculum, instruction, or assessment. They are vague, incoherent, unmeasurable, and devoid of historical content and skills development, as is evident in the following example: "All students will acquire historical understanding of societal ideas and forces throughout the history of New Jersey, the United States, and the world."

New Jersey

CLARITY	0
ORGANIZATION	0
HISTORICAL SOUNDNESS	0
U.S./WORLD CONTENT	0
ABSENCE OF MANIPULATION	0
FREQUENCY	0
TOTAL SCORE (out of 60)	0
GRADE	F, useless

New Mexico

Title: *Social Studies K-12 Content Standards and Benchmarks*
Status: Approved by State Board of Education, August, 1996

New Mexico's standards are framed in broad social studies themes of "concepts and processes," "continuity and change," "individuals, groups, and institutions," "civic ideals and practices," "productivity, distribution, and consumption," "people, cultures, places, and environments," and "global connections and technology." History has been effectively removed from the curriculum. There is nothing here that would assist teachers to induce a child to develop historical skills or gain historical knowledge. Consider this example: "[Students will] identify the people, events, places, and ideas that created the prehistory and history of the United States and the Americas."

New Mexico

CLARITY	1
ORGANIZATION	0
HISTORICAL SOUNDNESS	0
U.S./WORLD CONTENT	0
ABSENCE OF MANIPULATION	0
FREQUENCY	1
TOTAL SCORE (out of 60)	2
GRADE	F, useless

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New York

Title: "Preliminary Draft Framework for Social Studies"
Status: Draft, June 9, 1995

The New York standards are centered in social studies concepts that severely weaken the teaching and learning of history. Although history is found in the six basic standards, no attention is given to specific content, to the nature and application of chronology, or to historical skill development and application. The state has recently issued a rather lengthy "Resource Guide" (not reviewed here) that may provide some of the substance missing in these standards. This publication includes a scope and sequence for each grade, as well as sample lessons and assessment information. We were unable to review or assess these materials thoroughly because they became available as this report went to press. Given a cursory review, however, it appears that these materials provide substance missing in the standards.

STATE REPORT CARD

New York

CLARITY	3
ORGANIZATION	3
HISTORICAL SOUNDNESS	1
U.S./WORLD CONTENT	1
ABSENCE OF MANIPULATION	0
FREQUENCY	6
TOTAL SCORE (out of 60)	14
GRADE	F, useless

North Carolina

Title: "North Carolina Course of Study: Social Studies Curriculum"
Status: Draft, received May 22, 1997

These "program outcomes," presented in the familiar social studies divisions of history, geography, economics, political science, and social sciences, are not actually written as standards. Rather, a number of brief "essays" are offered that are meant to highlight the skills necessary to be an "active, informed, and responsible citizen." This "skills" approach is bereft of content. For example, secondary students are asked to "use an array of skills in problem solving, decision making, and planning." Yet there is no evidence that students will ever use these skills as part of a well-crafted plan to learn history (e.g., to acquire specific historical knowledge, to develop historical perspective, to learn about chronology).

STATE REPORT CARD

North Carolina

CLARITY	0
ORGANIZATION	3
HISTORICAL SOUNDNESS	0
U.S./WORLD CONTENT	0
ABSENCE OF MANIPULATION	0
FREQUENCY	1
TOTAL SCORE (out of 60)	4
GRADE	F, useless

North Dakota — No standards were available for review.

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Ohio

Title: *Model Competency-Based Social Studies Program*
Status: Published by State Department of Education, November 2, 1993

The Ohio standards were published in 1993 and are among the oldest "active" standards in the nation. They are also among the most detailed of all "social studies" standards. There is a heavy emphasis on identifying students as "members of a global community" who must learn to "think creatively and critically in order to solve problems and make decisions." Unfortunately, in doing all these laudable things the standards do not place much emphasis on learning history content or skills. There is very little specific content for U.S., European, or world history.

STATE REPORT CARD

Ohio

CLARITY	4
ORGANIZATION	3
HISTORICAL SOUNDNESS	1
U.S./WORLD CONTENT	0
ABSENCE OF MANIPULATION	2
FREQUENCY	8
TOTAL SCORE (out of 60)	18
GRADE	D, marginally useful

Oklahoma

Title: *Priority Academic Student Skills: Social Studies*
Status: Revised March 1997

The Oklahoma document evinces much pedagogical common sense. It speaks intelligently about communities, culture, and citizenship. However, its treatment of U.S. and world history is superficial and lacks intellectual substance with respect to historical facts and understanding. Consider this example: "Students will identify causes, effects, and resolutions of national and international wars and civil unrest."

STATE REPORT CARD

Oklahoma

CLARITY	6
ORGANIZATION	1
HISTORICAL SOUNDNESS	4
U.S./WORLD CONTENT	1
ABSENCE OF MANIPULATION	0
FREQUENCY	9
TOTAL SCORE (out of 60)	21
GRADE	D, marginally useful

Oregon — No standards were available for review.

Pennsylvania

Title: *Chapter Five Learning Outcomes*
Status: State approved for implementation, 1993. (Department of Education is converting all "learning outcomes" to standards.)

The learning outcomes contain no standards for history content, skills, or dispositions. If history is to be taught at all, it supposedly flows from this single statement: "All students demonstrate an understanding of major events, cultures, groups, and individuals in the historical development of Pennsylvania, the United States and other nations, and describe themes and patterns of historical development." The best that can be said of these "citizenship" outcomes is that they are slated for replacement with specific history/social science content standards.

STATE REPORT CARD

Pennsylvania

CLARITY	0
ORGANIZATION	0
HISTORICAL SOUNDNESS	0
U.S./WORLD CONTENT	0
ABSENCE OF MANIPULATION	0
FREQUENCY	0
TOTAL SCORE (out of 60)	0
GRADE	F, useless

Rhode Island — No standards were available for review.

South Carolina — No standards were available for review.

South Dakota — No viable standards were available for review.

Tennessee

Title: *K-12 Social Studies Curriculum Framework*
Status: Approved by State Board of Education, May 1997

The Tennessee standards claim to have followed the format of the *National History Standards Basic Edition*, yet the Volunteer State's standards-setters managed to remove most relevant and specific historical content and skills from the national prototype. The authors do not provide any evidence that the complexity of understanding history is itself understood. History is reduced to a list of items presented in rough chronological order. It probably would have been better simply to reissue the flawed national standards. The best that can be said is that Tennessee is committed to connecting its standards to state assessments.

STATE REPORT CARD

Tennessee

CLARITY	1
ORGANIZATION	4
HISTORICAL SOUNDNESS	5
U.S./WORLD CONTENT	2
ABSENCE OF MANIPULATION	0
FREQUENCY	9
TOTAL SCORE (out of 60)	21
GRADE	D, marginally useful

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Texas

Title: "Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills for Social Studies"
Status: Corrected Draft for State Board Approval, August 1997

The philosophy and methodology of these standards are solid. The standards permit students to expand their knowledge of history by learning about individual men and women, both famous and ordinary, who exhibited good citizenship. The 7th and 8th grade U.S. History courses include subjects usually not encountered until high school. These standards are politically honest, balanced, and intellectually rigorous. World history standards, however, are weak on the ancient era. The high school course begins with the fall of Rome.

Texas

CLARITY	10
ORGANIZATION	6
HISTORICAL SOUNDNESS	12
U.S./WORLD CONTENT	5
ABSENCE OF MANIPULATION	5
FREQUENCY	15
TOTAL SCORE (out of 60)	53
GRADE	B, notable

Utah

Title: *Core Curriculum: Social Studies*
Status: Revised, received May 8, 1997

The best feature of the Utah standards is that they are presented grade-by-grade. Unfortunately, they do not contain sufficient history content, nor are skills tied to content. The standards are also vague and unmeasurable, as is evident in this example: "Students will . . . analyze the various cultures prevalent in the United States." To the familiar social studies categories of history, geography, civics, and economics, Utah has added law-related, values, career, international, multicultural, and free enterprise education. Such a broad menu practically ensures that history will not receive adequate attention.

Utah

CLARITY	4
ORGANIZATION	3
HISTORICAL SOUNDNESS	4
U.S./WORLD CONTENT	2
ABSENCE OF MANIPULATION	1
FREQUENCY	12
TOTAL SCORE (out of 60)	26
GRADE	C, useful

Vermont

Title: *Vermont's Framework of Standards and Learning Opportunities: History and Social Science Standards*
Status: Approved by State Board of Education, Spring, 1996

Vermont's standards are completely lacking in historical content and essential skills. Such standards for Pre-K as "demonstrate understanding of different concepts of time, using calendars, interpreting alternate time models (e.g., linear vs. cyclical), various dating systems," "evaluate issues, using at least two categories from these history and social science standards," and "identify multiple causes and effects for events under study," are not viable for young learners. The Vermont standards set extremely ambitious expectations, but supply none of the requisite skills and knowledge by which these might be attained.

Vermont

CLARITY	1
ORGANIZATION	1
HISTORICAL SOUNDNESS	2
U.S./WORLD CONTENT	0
ABSENCE OF MANIPULATION	0
FREQUENCY	4
TOTAL SCORE (out of 60)	8
GRADE	F, useless

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Virginia

Title: *History and Social Science Standards for Learning*
Status: Approved by State Board of Education, June 1995

Virginia has developed outstanding history standards. They are clearly written and provide solid content. Standards-setters from other states should carefully review them. Having successfully proven that high quality history standards can be produced, the next challenge for Virginia is to design a complementary assessment instrument that remains faithful to the standards' depth and rigor. Despite the state's generally fine performance in standards-setting, there might be some concern about whether or not children should learn local or state history before U.S. History, and about neglect of religion as a source of American moral, political, and socio-economic behavior.

STATE REPORT CARD

Virginia

CLARITY	12
ORGANIZATION	6
HISTORICAL SOUNDNESS	14
U.S./WORLD CONTENT	6
ABSENCE OF MANIPULATION	6
FREQUENCY	15
TOTAL SCORE (out of 60)	59
GRADE	A, exemplary

Washington

Title: "Essential Academic Learning Requirements: Social Studies"
Status: Draft, received July 21, 1997

Washington's standards are organized by history, geography, civics, and economics. A separate section for history is provided, but its content is too vague to be of much value for curriculum development or assessment. That the standards themselves are not clear and cannot be measured is evident in this example: "The student will identify social issues and define problems to pose historical questions." The "benchmark" concept might be a good idea if tied to specific content and skills. Unfortunately, the benchmarks presented are not "essential" or helpful.

STATE REPORT CARD

Washington

CLARITY	1
ORGANIZATION	0
HISTORICAL SOUNDNESS	6
U.S./WORLD CONTENT	1
ABSENCE OF MANIPULATION	0
FREQUENCY	6
TOTAL SCORE (out of 60)	14
GRADE	F, useless

West Virginia

Title: "Instructional Goals and Objectives: Adolescent Social Studies Education"
Status: Draft, received May 21, 1997

The West Virginia standards try, but fail, to integrate history with geography, civics, and economics in broad course outlines of "United States Studies" and "World Studies." The standards are not well designed for easy reading or practical use. There is some attention to specific content themes for U.S. and world history, but many standards are vague and uneven. Some standards are sensible and doable (e.g., calling for students to "chart the contacts that occurred between Native American and European settlers") while others are too broad to comprehend and assess. (Consider the following: "analyze the effect of United States policy on Native Americans.") The course divisions are helpful, but history content and skills are not made important. As presented, it is doubtful that students will be able to grasp the intended integration of history with other disciplines.

STATE REPORT CARD

West Virginia

CLARITY	5
ORGANIZATION	5
HISTORICAL SOUNDNESS	5
U.S./WORLD CONTENT	2
ABSENCE OF MANIPULATION	0
FREQUENCY	13
TOTAL SCORE (out of 60)	30
GRADE	C, useful

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Wisconsin

Title: "Wisconsin's Model Academic Standards for Social Studies"
Status: Draft, September 1997

Wisconsin's standards divide social studies into geography, history, political science and civics, economics, and the behavioral sciences. None of the subject area standards is actually connected to any specific course of historical study. In fact, the "history" section notes that "concepts, content, and skills related to history may be taught" in courses that include non-history subjects. The standards are vague, lacking in specific content, and impossible to measure. Standards such as "identify and describe significant events and people in the history of Wisconsin and the United States" (ostensibly to be mastered by grade four) indicate that little serious attempt was made to introduce and guide students in historical study. There is no reference to specific content, either in United States, world, or European history. The various themes may hold promise as a framework, but without information on content and skills, these standards will not help teachers design effective curricula or assessments.

STATE REPORT CARD

Wisconsin

CLARITY	1
ORGANIZATION	1
HISTORICAL SOUNDNESS	6
U.S./WORLD CONTENT	2
ABSENCE OF MANIPULATION	0
FREQUENCY	6
TOTAL SCORE (out of 60)	16
GRADE	F, useless

Wyoming — No standards were available for review.

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